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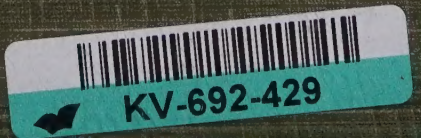
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THE
LETTERS OF SIDONIUS

TRANSLATED, WITH INTRODUCTION
AND NOTES, BY

O. M. DALTON, M.A.

IN TWO VOLUMES
VOLUME I

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PREFACE

It is somewhat remarkable that the complete letters of Sidonius have never been translated into English. Though their style is often tiresome, though many of them seem at first sight to add little of moment to the sum of existing knowledge, yet the nine books, regarded as a whole, are still in many ways the richest source of information on Roman provincial life during the last years of the Empire in the West. And as a whole they should be read. Even the best selection is liable to omit what is really necessary for a full comprehension of the author and his view of life; omissions which singly appear unimportant have a cumulative power in creating false ideas; they distort the perspective, confuse the values, and invert the relative significance of parts. Where a writer's work does not crush by bulk, or enervate by dullness, it is generally best to let the whole produce its due organic effect, unmarred by the subtractions of an editor. In the present case, the bulk is not excessive, for there are not much more than a hundred letters; and the dull places are easily escaped by every *bonus arbiter et artifex lector* [1], experienced in the process of winnowing grain from chaff.

[1] II. ii. 19.

If the question of rendering the whole or part were the only trouble with which he had to contend, the translator of Sidonius might rid himself of all anxiety. But he must always be haunted by doubts as to his success in conveying in every case the sense of a confessedly difficult writer, often ambiguous in phrase, and sometimes recalling to the tired mind that creature of the sea which conceals itself at will in a cloud of its own ink. I cannot hope to have avoided error where scholars of eminence have admitted their uncertainties;[1] and there are yet many passages the true sense of which lies beyond my divination.

It would have been possible indefinitely to expand the notes at the end of volume ii; but they have been purposely abridged, that Sidonius may speak for himself with as little interruption as possible. A general knowledge in the reader of Roman history and mythology has been assumed; for instance, notes are not inserted to explain who Sulla or Julius Caesar were; Aganippe and Hippocrene are not defined; nor is the legend of Triptolemus related at length. Philological discussions have been omitted, and explanations confined to points essential to the comprehension of the text; it seemed more convenient that the Introduction should give in a consecutive form many facts which notes could only have given in isolation; and I have endeavoured in this part of the book to supply an abstract of the conditions obtaining in

[1] *Ceterum non tam emendatoris indigere Sidonium quam interpretis in dies magis me perspexisse libere profiteor* (Mohr, *Praefatio*, p. vii).

southern Gaul as they are revealed to us in the Letters. Biographical matter is also for the most part removed from the notes; an alphabetic list of correspondents, friends and contemporaries, whose names occur in the Letters, will be found on p. clx, with such cardinal facts in their history as have been ascertained. Names of places have been rendered, as a rule, by their modern equivalents, which seem to make the geography more immediately intelligible, especially to those acquainted with central and southern France. Where an ancient form is consecrated by general use, or seems demanded by the nature of the context, it has been purposely retained.

Like every other writer on Sidonius, I must express deep obligations to the earlier scholars who have edited the Letters, or described the period with which they are concerned, from Savaron and Sirmond, to Chaix, Fertig, and Mommsen, to Germain, Baret, Hodgkin, and Dill. To the learned Jesuit Sirmond, who edited Sidonius with an erudition worthy of the century of Ducange, and to the Abbé Chaix, whose long and careful study is indispensable to every student, the debt is greatest of all. The edition of Grégoire and Collombet has sometimes received adverse criticism; but though compelled to differ from many of their renderings, I have often found their volumes useful, and consulted them with advantage. For the literary and local history of Gaul in the fifth century, the monumental *Histoire littéraire de la France* of the Benedictines remains indispensable; the same may be said of Tillemont's sixteenth volume. Nor should

any writer occupied with the Gaul of Sidonius' day forget the work of Fauriel, of Amédée Thierry and Ampère. Sir W. Dill's sketch of Roman life in the fifth century has constantly rendered invaluable service. Though frequently consulting the text of Lütjohann in the great edition in Vol. VII of the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, I have mainly used that of Mohr in the Teubner Series; thanks are due to Messrs. B. G. Teubner & Co. for courteously permitting the use of their edition.

Something has been said in the Introduction on the style of Sidonius (p. cxxi), enough perhaps to indicate the problems which it presents to the interpreter. I have endeavoured to keep in mind the sane view of Dryden, that the translator's first duty is to grasp the sense as thoroughly as possible, in order that it may flow naturally into a new expression, and escape 'tedious transfusion' by copying word for word. A literal transfusion of Sidonius at his worst would be tedious indeed; it would defeat its own end, since we read him for his meaning, and no longer for his Latinity. I have felt it necessary to render his antitheses, and reproduce his puns wherever translation is reasonably possible; but where there is no obvious English equivalent for a gratuitous and pointless contrast, I have often spared my readers, not going out of the way to accentuate what may be fairly called his *curiosa infelicitas*, his love of puerile dexterity. Fortunately, however, he does not always go on stilts, and many letters, especially those written later in life, move simply, from starting-point to goal. His 'style' is not always with him;

it is indeed somewhat of a theatrical costume, and separable from his real self. When a busy life compelled him to be direct, he wrote without pretence, and can be translated in the same unpretentious manner. To all admirers of his character, the use of this *stylus rusticans* is a real relief; were he always tricked out in his finery, he would inspire in the world of letters the same amused contempt which the elderly fop Germanicus aroused among his less affected neighbours at Chantelle (IV. xiii).

I am indebted to my colleague Mr. G. F. Hill for very kindly reading through the proofs.

British Museum,
1914.

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INTRODUCTION

(Caius) Sollius Apollinaris (Modestus) Sidonius[1] was born at Lyons, about the year 431, and died at Clermont perhaps in A. D. 489, at the age of nearly sixty years.[2] The exceptional interest of the period covered by his life is apparent from these dates; he saw the last sickness and the death of the Roman Empire in the West, and is our principal authority for some of the events which attended its extinction. He was a younger contemporary of Attila and Gaiseric. The campaigns of Aëtius took place in his boyhood; he was a youth of about twenty when the Huns were defeated on the Catalaunian plains, and for the first time in history the Roman and the Teuton fought side by side against a common

[1] Sidonius is the principal name, and by it he is properly designated. He himself (*Carm.* ix) gives the order of his names as Sollius Apollinaris Sidonius. Caius is substituted for Apollinaris by Claudianus Mamertus in the dedication of the *De Statu Animae*. Modestus is derived from the MS. of the Abbey of Cluny, in which Savaron discovered the epitaph (see p. lii below); but our author himself does not mention it. The description 'Sidonius Apollinaris' dates from the thirteenth century, and became general through its adoption by Politian (Fertig, p. 5; Germain, pp. 178–80).

[2] Mommsen (*Praefatio*, p. xlvii) gives the year of his birth as between 430 and 433. Hodgkin (*Italy and her Invaders*, ii. 304) is in favour of about 430.

enemy. He was about twenty-four when the house of Theodosius became extinct with Valentinian III, and the Vandals plundered the city of the Caesars (A.D. 455). He was still alive when Romulus Augustulus laid down his diadem at the bidding of Odovakar. More than once his path crossed that of the last emperors who ruled in Italy; as the son-in-law of Avitus, and a high officer of state under Anthemius, he saw Rome in the final phases of her imperial existence. In his own country he met or corresponded with every person of importance. He had dined with Majorian, he had played backgammon with the Visigoth Theodoric II; he lived to become first the prisoner and then the subject of that monarch's fierce successor, Euric. He exchanged letters with Lupus, Remigius, Faustus, and all the leaders of the Church in Gaul. There was hardly a single distinguished name with which in some way or another his own was not associated. Like Cassiodorus, he enjoyed an outlook over two worlds, the old Roman civilization in its decay, and mediaeval society in its beginnings. To paraphrase a sentence of Sir Thomas Browne, he stands like Janus in the field of history.

Sidonius came of a senatorial family long settled in Gallia Lugdunensis, a family to which, as he himself says, the holding of high office seemed almost a hereditary right: both his father and his grandfather had been prefects in Gaul.[1] His mother belonged to the gens

[1] His father, whose name may have been Apollinaris, was a secretary of state under Honorius, and prefect in Gaul under Valentinian III in 448–9 (V. ix. 2). His grandfather, the first member of his family to be converted to Christianity

of the Aviti, which was connected with other noble provincial families, the Ferreoli, the Ommatii, and the Agroecii; when therefore he married Papianilla, daughter of the Avitus who became emperor, he may only have added a new tie to an old alliance.[1] He had a brother, who may not have lived to mature age, as no letter is addressed to him;[2] he had aunts or sisters and a mother-in-law, mentioned as taking care of one of his children (V. xvi. 5). A nephew Secundus (III. xii), and a cousin Apollinaris complete the list of his own relations, with the possible addition of Simplicius, who is so often mentioned with Apollinaris that he may have been his brother. He had two brothers-in-law, Ecdicius and Agricola,[3] of the latter of whom we hear little, of the former, much. For Ecdicius was the hero of his native country of Auvergne. He distinguished himself by great gallantry in the last struggle for independence (III. iii), and seems to have had in him much of the spirit of mediaeval chivalry.[4] Nor

(III. xii), was prefect in the time of the usurper Constantine (the 'Tyrant'), A. D. 408.

[1] Among the connexions of Sidonius were Tonantius Ferreolus, Philagrius, Magnus and his sons Probus and Felix, Priscus, and Valerianus. For his pedigree, see Mommsen, *Praefatio*, p. xlvii.

[2] *Carm.* xvi. 70 ff., where Faustus is thanked for the care bestowed on his education.

[3] Agricola seems to have led a country life and taken no prominent part in affairs (II. xii).

[4] In this display of personal courage he was but following the example of his father Avitus, who once challenged a Hun trooper to single combat, and slew him in the sight of two armies (*Carm.* vii. 246). Several allusions in the Letters present Ecdicius in the light of a lover of outdoor sports and

was he deficient in other gifts; he must have possessed some talent for diplomacy, since he was instrumental in rallying the Burgundians to the cause of Auvergne at a very critical moment. Sidonius and Papianilla[1] had one son, Apollinaris, and three daughters, Alcima, Roscia, and Severiana.[2] The boy, whose early promise is mentioned in one of the most pleasing passages of the Letters (IV. xii. 1), was destined to disappoint his parents, first in his failure to maintain the intellectual promise of his youth, and later by more serious deficiencies, recorded by other hands than those of his own father.[3] Of the girls, only Roscia and Severiana are

physical prowess. He had other moral qualities besides courage; he rivalled Bishop Patiens in the generosity with which he relieved the distress of Auvergne after the Visigothic invasion (see below, p. xl), and is thought by some to have ultimately become a bishop.

[1] Though a single letter is addressed to Papianilla, who is there praised as a good wife, she too remains a rather shadowy figure. The only actions attributed to her which at all suggest a personality are related by Gregory of Tours (see below, p. cxlviii).

[2] Unless, as Mommsen has suggested, the three names all belong to a single person.

[3] Apollinaris associated himself with Victorius whom Euric appointed governor of Auvergne, and accompanied him on his flight to Italy, where he almost shared his fate. From Milan he managed to effect his escape, and returned to Auvergne, where he was reconciled to his father, reformed his ways, and married Placidina (Ruricius, *Ep.* II. xxv; and cf. Chaix, ii. 289 ff.). Gregory of Tours in one place relates that in A.D. 507 he led the nobles of Auvergne at the battle of Vouglé or Vouillé near Poitiers, in which the forces of Alaric II were defeated by Clovis. In another place he mentions him as one of the successors of Sidonius in the see

mentioned in the Letters, and both in an incidental manner; for Sidonius was not communicative on his family affairs. The name of Alcima does not occur at all: we learn more of her from other sources than Sidonius himself tells us of her sisters. She became noted for her devotion to the saints, and for her munificence to the Church,[1] and is said to have joined her sister-in-law Placidina in a successful effort to obtain the see of Clermont for her brother some years after her father's death (see below, p. li, note 2).

Sidonius was educated in his native city, where the schools, if less famous than those of Bordeaux, were yet of high repute. He passed through the regular course of academic training, the essential parts of which consisted of grammar and rhetoric; and in both Letters and Poems preserves kindly memories of his teachers and fellow students.[2] As might be expected from the fortunate circumstances of his birth, and his father's rank as prefect, his youth was probably a happy one, passed alternately between the city and the country estate, where he enjoyed games and all the pleasures of

of Clermont, stating that he died four months after his election. The two passages are reconcilable, because Gregory never says, as some critics have assumed, that Apollinaris died at Vouillé, only that he was present at the battle (Gregory of Tours, *De gloria martyrum*, lxv; cf. *Hist. Franc.* II. xxxvii. Cf. also Chaix, ii. 379; L. Schmidt, *Geschichte der deutschen Stämme*, p. 276).

[1] Gregory of Tours, *Hist. Franc.* III. ii. 12; *De gloria martyrum*, c. 64.

[2] Among his teachers were Hoënius (*Carm.* ix. 313) and Eusebius (VI. i. 3); among the comrades of his youth, Probus, Avitus (III. i), Faustinus (III. iv), and Aquilus (V. ix).

the chase.[1] His love of eloquence began early; he refers to the delight with which, as a youth of eighteen, he listened to the speech of Nicetius when Astyrius assumed the consulship at Arles in 449 (VIII. vi. 5). After his marriage, which must have been an early one, he probably divided his time between Lyons and Auvergne; in the latter region was situated his father-in-law's estate of Avitacum, which was ultimately to come to him through Papianilla, and of which he has left a description (II. ii; *Carm.* xviii). It was probably during the first years of his married life that he frequented the Visigothic Court at Toulouse, from which he wrote home the very interesting letter descriptive of Theodoric II to his brother-in-law Agricola (I. ii).[2] Avitus, to whose exertions the coalition of Roman and Visigoth against Attila had been largely due, had long favoured an understanding between the two peoples. He had been a familiar figure at the Court of Theodoric I, whose sons he had endeavoured to imbue with Roman civilization;[3] it was therefore natural that he should

[1] Sidonius describes himself as always a great devotee of all games (on which see pp. cxi, cxii). He also rode, hawked, and hunted (IV. iv). Cf. Chaix, i. 69 ff.

[2] The consistently eulogistic nature of the letter is sufficient indication that it was written with an ulterior purpose. We may compare *Carm.* xxiii. 70 ff.:

> *Martius ille rector atque*
> *Magno patre prior, decus Getarum,*
> *Romanae columen salusque gentis*
> *Theudoricus . . .*

[3] He is even said to have taught the younger Theodoric to appreciate Virgil (*Carm.* vii. 497; Jornandes, *De reb. Get.* xl, xli). Cf. Hodgkin, ii, p. 379.

encourage the visits of his son-in-law to the more important of these pupils. He may not have clearly foreseen the part which he was destined personally to play in the near future; but it must have appeared a possible contingency that the Goths and their Gallo-Roman neighbours might once more be called upon to take decisive action together. With Tonantius Ferreolus and many others, he may well have shared the belief that the Roman understanding with the most civilized of the barbaric peoples might save an Empire which Italy was too enfeebled to lead. He had seen the Visigoths and the Burgundians in their homes, and learned to appreciate the rude virtues and the manly strength which redeemed the coarser elements in their nature. He dreamed perhaps of a Teutonic aristocracy more and more refined by Latin influences, which should impart to the Romans the qualities of a less sophisticated race and to their own countrymen a wider acceptance of Italian culture.[1] He knew that for more than a century Gaul had been the most vigorous and enlightened portion of the Empire in the West, and as Italy became year by year more helpless, he may well have believed that the leadership of the decaying state might pass into the control of his own country. But throughout he probably gave Theodoric II credit for a greater disinterestedness than he possessed; for in all likelihood the Visigothic king intended to exploit the Roman connexion in the

[1] As noted above, Avitus' attitude towards the barbarians was shared by his son Ecdicius. It was also shared by other members of his house, for at the time of Euric's aggression, Sidonius appealed to a younger Avitus to dissuade the Visigothic king from his provocative policy (III. i. 5).

interest of himself and his own people. Be that as it may, when, in 455, the line of Theodosius became extinct with Valentinian III, the murderer of Aëtius, Avitus was sent as *magister militum* to secure the recognition of Petronius Maximus in Gaul. But while he was at Toulouse, news came of that emperor's murder, whereupon Theodoric urged him to assume the diadem himself.[1] After a meeting either of representative magnates or of the Council of the Seven Provinces [2] at Ugernum (Beaucaire), Avitus, then some sixty years of age, was formally invested with the purple.

The event was the first turning-point in the career of Sidonius: it opened before him the brightest prospects of advancement, and awakened in him that ardent desire of political distinction which was for many years to exert so strong an influence on his life. He accompanied his father-in-law to Rome, and there, following the precedent of a Claudian or an Ausonius, delivered the Panegyric of Avitus which earned him the honour of a statue in the Forum of Trajan.[3] But the hopes

[1] In the Panegyric of Avitus, Sidonius describes the part taken by the Goths in the elevation of that prince (*Carm.* vii. 441 ff., 508 ff., 570 ff.).

[2] The Seven Provinces formed the *Dioecesis Viennensis*, the second of the two 'dioceses' into which Gaul was divided. They were: Viennensis, Narbonensis Prima and Secunda, Novempopulana, Aquitanica Prima and Secunda, Alpes Maritimae (Marquardt, *Römische Staatsverwaltung*, i. 261, 509). In 418 Honorius had issued a Constitution renewing the Council of Representatives of the Provinces, which under normal circumstances met at Arles (cf. L. Schmidt, *Geschichte*, as above, pp. 288–9, and p. xxx below.

[3] Cf. IX. xvi; *Carm.* viii. 8:

Ulpia quod rutilat porticus aere meo.

which the young aspirant might legitimately base upon his relationship to the head of the state were soon dashed to the ground: Avitus did not fulfil the expectations of his friends. His personal courage availed him little in Rome. On the other hand, his character revealed unsuspected weakness,[1] and his position as a provincial nobleman among the critical aristocracy of the capital became each day more difficult. His every action was watched with unfriendly eyes; his bodyguard of Visigoths aroused resentment; and when, to provide their payment, he was reduced to melting statues and stripping the bronze tiles from temple roofs, it needed but a pretext to ensure his speedy ruin. The immediate cause of his downfall lay in the hostility of Ricimer, now only at the beginning of his career as king-maker. The formidable Sueve had achieved a notable triumph over the Vandal fleet near Corsica (456), and, flushed with victory, determined to remove an emperor over whose election he had exerted no

The statue, which was placed between the Greek and Latin Libraries, is now lost. As a work of art illustrative of the decadence, it would have possessed for us an interest almos equal to that of the Panegyric which has survived.

[1] For the career and character of Avitus see Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, ch. xxxvi; Hodgkin, as above, pp. 374 ff.; L. Schmidt, *Geschichte der deutschen Stämme*, i, 1910, pp. 252 ff. Gibbon's accusations of immorality are not now regarded as justified (Hodgkin, p. 393; and Bury, Gibbon, vol. iv, p. 14, note). Avitus seems to have been a man of a simple nature, whose inaptitude for empire lay rather in lack of subtlety than want of virtue. His greatest claim to distinction was probably his action (already noticed) in bringing about the rapprochement between the Gallo-Romans and the Visigoths.

control. The unfortunate Avitus, who found his position in Rome untenable, fled to Gaul with the object of obtaining military support, but returning with an insufficient force, was defeated by Ricimer at Placentia.[1] The conqueror, establishing a precedent destined to be followed more than once in the immediate future, compelled him to exchange the diadem for the mitre, but the transformation did not long preserve the victim's life. Apprehensive that his fate was only postponed, Avitus seems to have sought safety in renewed flight; it is certain that he met his death within a few months of his deposition.[2]

The fall of Avitus was a crushing blow to Sidonius. He returned home, where he found many spirits troubled like his own, and a party among the nobility still indisposed to acquiesce in the rule of Ricimer, or to see Gaul robbed of the leadership which she had fairly assumed. Feeling ran so high that a regular conspiracy was formed with both Visigothic and Burgundian support, in the hope of placing upon the throne a second emperor approved by Gaul. The candidate is conjectured to have been the gallant Marcellinus;[3] but it seems unlikely that

[1] L. Schmidt, as above, p. 254; C. M. H. i. 421.

[2] John of Antioch (Fr. 202) says that he was either starved or strangled. Gregory of Tours (*Hist. Franc.* II. xi) relates that he attempted to escape from Italy and take sanctuary at the shrine of S. Julianus at Brioude (Brivas) in his native country of Auvergne, but that he died on the road, his remains being carried for burial to the church which he had attempted to reach alive.

[3] The episode of the conspiracy is obscure, and the commentators are strangely silent. It should be observed that Sidonius alludes to it as *coniuratio Marcelliana* (I. xi. 6),

such a scheme can have had the consent of the person principally involved, for Marcellinus, actually commander in Dalmatia, had been the comrade of Majorian, now raised by Ricimer to the principate (April 457), and during the new reign played a part of conspicuous loyalty.[1] Majorian had almost all the gifts which make a ruler—courage, prudence, tact, love of justice, and magnanimity. A puppet-emperor might have been defied, but not a man like this. As soon as events permitted, he entered Gaul, and in 458 and 459 reduced the rebels to submission.[2] The focus of the rising was Lyons, which had actually received a Burgundian garrison.[3] Whether these barbaric auxiliaries remained in the city, or whether they were persuaded to withdraw by Petrus, Majorian's Secretary of State, there could only be one end to the adventure; the city, after suffering great hardships, was compelled to unconditional surrender.[4] The emperor felt it necessary to exercise severity; in addition

the adjective (if this is the word he really wrote), pointing rather to a Marcellus than a Marcellinus. *Marcelliniana* is a possible emendation, or *Marcellini*, as suggested by Mommsen (cf. P. Allard, *Revue des questions historiques*, lxxxiii, 1908, pp. 438 ff.).

[1] Barker, in C. M. H. i. 425.

[2] Mommsen, *Praefatio*, p. xlviii, places this first visit of Majorian to Gaul in the autumn of 458. Cf. also Schmidt, C. M. H. i. 202.

[3] *Carm.* v. 572 ff.; Schmidt, *Geschichte der deutschen Stämme*, Part i, pp. 256, 373.

[4] The miseries of Lyons may have been in part due to internal feuds breaking out when the hopelessness of the rebellion became apparent.

to the ruin of its walls and buildings, Lyons was punished by severe taxation. In this rising and its consequent disasters Sidonius took a prominent part; he seems to imply that he and his friend Catullinus actually bore arms,[1] and he was certainly one of those who had to smart under the lash of a 'tribute' described in one of his poems as triple-headed, like the monster Geryon.[2] After the capture of Lyons, the movement collapsed: perhaps by the secret activity among the rebels of men like Paeonius, the upstart, who during the interregnum had usurped positions to which he had no claim, and who now sowed dissension in the hope of securing favour at the victor's hands.[3] Theodoric, who had attacked Arles, abandoned open hostility, and renewed his previous relations to the empire; the Burgundians, returning to their old position as loyal *foederati*, were confirmed in possession of all Lugdunensis Prima except the capital itself.

From the embarrassment into which his active participation in rebellion had thrown him, Sidonius extricated himself, perhaps with the assistance of the literary Petrus, by the exercise of his poetic talents. His short appeal against the triple impost was successful; he made a

[1] *Carm.* iv. 11, 12, and v. 572 ff.:

Mihi diverso nuper sub Marte cadenti
Iussisti placido, Victor, ut essem animo.

[2] *Carm.* xiii.

[3] The failure of Gaul to establish a state based in the last resort upon Visigothic support, was perhaps a loss to civilization. Hodgkin has observed that had the effort resulted in a Visigothic power sufficiently strong to resist the Franks, the empire of Charlemagne might have been anticipated by a nobler nation.

further bid for the emperor's favour by writing a panegyric. It is difficult to exonerate our author from the charge of a certain moral pliancy in this matter. Not twenty months had elapsed since he had sung the praises of Avitus before the Senate at Rome, and now he stood forth in the town of his birth to laud the nominee of Avitus' murderer.[1] This second panegyric is in some ways superior to the first; if the heart of the writer was less glad, his pen was no less ready; and the poem contains passages of no small brilliance and great descriptive power.[2] Majorian loved letters, and had a generous nature; he accepted the tribute, and admitted the panegyrist to the circle of his friends. Sidonius received the title of count, and became a *persona grata* at the court; the extent of his influence became apparent during the second visit of Majorian to Gaul in the year 461.[3] At that time there appeared an anonymous satire which created a great stir at Arles; the writer

[1] It must be remembered in this connexion that the eulogistic description of Theodoric II (I. ii) was written in full consciousness of the fact that the Visigothic king had succeeded to the throne by murdering his brother Thorismond (Thorismud).

[2] It is *Carm.* vii: an abstract of it is given by Hodgkin, ii. 410. The kind of flattery which was expected from an imperial panegyrist in the fifth century is illustrated by the words: *Fuimus vestri quia causa triumphi, Ipsa ruina placet.*

[3] This is the date accepted by Mommsen (*Praefatio*, p. xlviii), and by Clinton. The Circus games which were just over (I. xi. 10) are taken by the latter authority to be the Quinquennalia of Majorian. But Hodgkin considers that the emperor was probably in Spain and Italy during the season 460–1.

severely lashed some of the personages most prominent under the new régime, among others the parvenu Paeonius, who was naturally consumed with the desire to unmask the hidden assailant. He thought he had succeeded in tracing the lampoon to Sidonius, whom he would have gladly humiliated. Instead of this, he was himself subjected to new and conspicuous discomfiture in the presence of the emperor, who at a banquet endorsed the conduct of his new friend by publicly resenting an unproved insinuation (X. xi).[1] Once more the star of Sidonius seemed in the ascendant; for the second time it was eclipsed. Majorian's career, which promised so much for the empire, was suddenly arrested, and the last real emperor of Rome fell a victim to the jealousy of Ricimer (461). The king-maker availed himself of the disappointment caused by the failure of a new naval expedition against the Vandals to remove too popular a rival.[2] During the

[1] This is one of the best of the descriptive letters. It is probable that the intimacy of Sidonius with Majorian had aroused the jealousy of others who, like Paeonius, were less successful in winning the emperor's good graces. These men were glad to use any opportunity to disgrace their brilliant rival, and used the episode of the lampoon to suit their own ends (cf. Chaix, i. 132). Hodgkin thinks that Sidonius may really have written the satire. It is true that he does not explicitly deny the charge brought against him; but the balance of probability seems against his authorship.

[2] Majorian was dethroned and put to death at Tortona in Piedmont in August 461. During the disturbances following his death Theodoric obtained possession of Narbonne (Schmidt, *Geschichte*, as above, p. 258). Before his murder in 466, this king had very probably seized Novempopulana and a great part of Narbonensis Prima (ibid. p. 263). The

next four years he kept upon the throne Severus, a feeble personage on whose nullity he could rely. Severus died in 465, whereupon Ricimer for two years controlled the destinies of Italy alone. In 467, however, a rapprochement with the court of Constantinople, alienated by the murder of Majorian, became the interest of Italy, and the Senate requested Leo I to nominate an emperor in the West.[1] He complied, naming Anthemius, a great Byzantine noble, son-in-law of Marcian, and a soldier of high repute. Soon after the new ruler had landed in Italy, he endeavoured to conciliate Ricimer by giving him his daughter Alypia in marriage.[2] For the first time since Majorian's death Italy indulged new hopes. Under a soldier supported by Byzantine influence she might make head against the barbarian without, while the union of Ricimer with the imperial princess promised internal peace.

When his prospects were for the second time overclouded by the untimely fate of Majorian, Sidonius passed six years of retirement at Lyons and upon his

death of Majorian seems also to have been the signal for encroachment on the Burgundian side. Gundioc reoccupied Lyons, and by 468 his frontiers had been widely extended towards the south, more or less with Roman consent (ibid. p. 375).

[1] For the events attending this change of policy, see Hodgkin, ii. 440; C. M. H. i. 426.

[2] The name of the bride was unknown until the discovery of the (fragmentary) History of John of Antioch (cf. C. Müller, *Fragt. Hist. Gr.* IV, pp. 535 ff., *Frag.* 209; Bury's edition of Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, vol. iv, appendix, p. 552). For the pedigree of Anthemius, see Hodgkin, p. 461. For Sidonius' description of Rome at the time of the wedding, see I. v. 10.

favourite estate of Avitacum. The quietness of his life was relieved by more than one round of visits to friends at Bordeaux and Narbonne; a number of the letters, and these among the most entertaining, were probably written during the leisure which he now enjoyed.[1] But for the ambitions awakened by experience of two courts and only latent during these years, this would perhaps have been the happiest period of his career. Reading or composing in his library, or instructing his young son; wandering in his grounds by the lake, and amusing himself upon occasion with games and with the chase, he found the hours pass not unpleasantly at home; abroad, the society of the cultured friends and relatives who vied with one another in their desire to show him hospitality, afforded him the most agreeable of distractions. But he had tasted publicity and imperial favour; he had fallen under the glamour of Rome; and amid all the ease and calm of his existence the thought of the prizes which had just slipped from his grasp was a source of secret discontent. He was still well under forty; he could not yet resign himself to the undistinguished life of a provincial noble.[2] While Ricimer remained sole arbiter of Rome's destinies, Ricimer who had caused the death of both his patrons, there seemed no place for him on the greater stage of the world. On all sides the road

[1] These are dated 461–7 in the translation. Chaix would reduce the number by assigning a few to the period after 475. In a few cases I have followed his opinion in preference to that of Baret, whose dating I have generally accepted.

[2] He probably felt in his own person all the discontent with which, in the moment of his success, he endeavoured to inspire his friend Polemius (I. vi).

was barred against him; he must accept the fate of the disappointed man.

Into these shadows the election of Anthemius and the improved position of affairs in Italy brought a sudden light; hopes almost abandoned rose once more. Sidonius began to consider whether he might not attain at the new court the position which fortune had twice placed almost within his reach and twice withdrawn. The course now taken by events was exceptionally favourable to the attempt. Anthemius fully grasped the importance of strengthening his new dominions, and his attention was naturally directed to Gaul as the bulwark of empire in the West. The provincials on their side were anxious to explain their needs, and to enlist the sympathies of the new prince; they probably had grievances for redress, and schemes for a strong policy against barbaric encroachment. A deputation was appointed to visit Rome, and after offering congratulations to Anthemius, to lay before him the hopes and the necessities of the country. What more natural than that the eloquent son-in-law of Avitus, one used to courts and no stranger in the capital, should be selected to act as leader? Doubtless to his great satisfaction, Sidonius found himself once more preparing to cross the Alps, furnished with an Imperial letter which placed all public means of transport at his disposal. After a favourable journey down the Ticino and the Po to Ravenna, he learned that the emperor was at Rome, and followed him thither by the Flaminian Way, arriving on the eve of the nuptials of Ricimer and Alypia.

The first step was taken; Sidonius had now to see that on this, his third endeavour to rise, he reached an

altitude commensurate with his persistent effort and with the dignity of his family. It is probable that Anthemius met him more than half-way, and that the comedy of advancement in which Sidonius now engaged was in reality directed by the imperial advisers. It was very important for the emperor to conciliate Gaul. He was now perfecting a defensive scheme against the aggression of Euric,[1] which involved the sanction of all Burgundian appropriations, and possibly a further cession,[2] in order to secure the more willing co-operation of Gundioc. It was a matter of moment to win for his policy a man of such influence in Lyons and Auvergne as Sidonius, and it may therefore be fairly surmised that the way of ascent was made smooth for the aspirant's feet. The leader of the deputation took up his quarters with a cultured Roman noble, Paulus, by whose assistance he prepared to combine the prosecution of his mission with a legitimate advancement of his private fortunes. The two selected the most efficacious patron in the Senate, Basilius, who had the

[1] Successor of Theodoric in 466. The imperial policy included an alliance with the Armoricans under Riothamus (cf. III. ix), whose part it would be to hold Berry against the Visigoths; and also an understanding with the Franks.

[2] The enlarged Burgundian territory was bounded, now or shortly afterwards, on the south by the Visigoths of Aquitanica Prima and by Narbonensis Secunda, on the north by the weak state of Aegidius and Syagrius in Belgica, soon destined to be absorbed by the Franks (Schmidt, *Geschichte*, pp. 375–7). It included the Viennensis, Maxima Sequanorum, Alpes Graiae et Poeninae, Lugdunensis Prima, including Nevers, and part of Narbonensis Secunda between the Rhône and the Durance.

reputation of obtaining promotions for all his clients and not for his relatives alone. It was arranged that the emperor should be favourably impressed by a panegyric delivered on his assumption of the consulship for the second term on New Year's Day, 468 A.D.[1] The story, which must be read in Sidonius' own words (I. ix), recalls some episode from court-life in the eighteenth century; as Baret has said, the scene might almost be an *entresol* at Versailles. The panegyric was graciously received—had not Basilius guaranteed as much? And the poet was magnificently rewarded with the office of Prefect of Rome, carrying with it the presidency of the Senate. It can hardly be supposed that the appointment was nothing more than a distinction offered to Letters, like the consulship of Ausonius, or those nominations with which ministers of the eighteenth century recompensed their literary partisans. As already hinted, it is more probable that in part at least the affair was prearranged, and that the panegyric provided an ostensible motive for an act really dictated by considerations of imperial policy.

Sidonius now rode, as he would have said, at a safe anchor of glory,[2] he had attained the highest grade but two in the imperial system of honours. There remained only the titles of Patrician and Consul; could he win these, he would have achieved the feat which he repeatedly declared to be every man's proper ambition; he would have risen to a higher rank than any of his ancestors. In the moment of his elation, he

[1] Anthemius had been consul for the first time thirteen years earlier, at Constantinople.

[2] Cf. I. i: *sufficientis gloriae anchora sedet.*

doubtless indulged golden dreams; but the unselfishness of his nature is shown by his evident desire that his friends in their turn should set their feet upon the official ladder, and by his promises to do all that he can to further their advancement.[1] Yet he soon found that office has its troubles; almost from the first, the path of greatness was rough to his feet. Among his duties as prefect was the superintendence of the Corn Supply, the *Praefectus Annonae* being his subordinate officer.[2] On one occasion supplies ran dangerously short, and he grew somewhat alarmed, fearing outbreaks in the amphitheatre on the part of the spoiled Roman populace; fortunately the arrival of ships at Ostia preserved him from the unpopularity which he dreaded (I. x. 2). A more serious event was the impeachment of Arvandus, Prefect of Gaul, and a personal acquaintance of his own, before a committee of the Senate on charges of peculation and high treason.[3]

[1] The letters to Polemius and Gaudentius illustrate this (IV. xiv; I. iii, iv). In the case of both, the persuasion appears to have been effective. Gaudentius became a vicarius; Polemius was the last Roman prefect in Gaul.

[2] The duties of the Prefect of Rome are defined in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, c. iv; cf. also Cassiodorus, *Var.* vi. 4; Marquardt, *Römische Staatsverwaltung*, ii. 131; C. M. H. i. 50.

[3] The impeachment was decided upon by the Council of the Seven Provinces, established by Honorius (Carette, *Les assemblées provinciales de la Gaule romaine*, 1895, p. 333; cf. also above, p. xviii). For the whole affair cf. Gibbon, ch. xxxvi ff.; Chaix, i. 299 ff. Arvandus seems to have completed a first tenure of office with credit; his disgrace began with the second. He was perhaps a man with certain good qualities, but a spendthrift, and incurably vain. During

Sidonius was now placed in a most embarrassing position. On the one hand, he could not but sympathize with this effort of his native province to end by a signal example the insolence and corruption which were leading Roman provincial government to disaster; moreover, the principal accuser, Tonantius Ferreolus, was his connexion and intimate friend. On the other hand, to leave Arvandus to his fate without lifting a finger, appeared a dishonourable and cowardly course. He decided to do what he could for the impeached man, who proved an intractable client, committing every possible blunder in the defence, and rendering the severest sentence unavoidable. The action of Sidonius has been commended by historians, among whom Gibbon is numbered.[1] He necessarily incurred much odium (I. vii. 1); for never had representative of law and order a more compromising client. The praise which thus falls to his lot is doubtless deserved, for it may well have been that Sidonius was unaware of Arvandus' treasonable correspondence with Euric, a matter which the prosecution may have kept as the trump-card to be played at Rome, and perhaps deliberately concealed from all friends of the accused, however nearly connected with themselves. Even when the treasonable letter was produced, Sidonius may have hoped against hope that it was not a genuine document, but had been supplied to the accusers by more unscrupulous enemies

his second tenure he was embarrassed by debt, and this was the origin of his downfall. As we shall see, the advice which he gave to Euric was actually carried out by that king.

[1] *Decline and Fall,* ch. xxxvi.

of the fallen prefect.[1] But though we may approve this loyalty to a fallen friend, we cannot but feel some astonishment that a man of Sidonius' high character should have permitted himself an intimacy with an unscrupulous and violent personage like Arvandus: he was wont to choose his intimates among men of a very different stamp, and to be fastidious in selection. The conceit and obstinacy of the ex-prefect frustrated all efforts to establish a plausible defence,[2] and Sidonius absented himself from Rome before sentence was pronounced, probably to avoid the pain of witnessing a condemnation which he had been unable to avert. But he and those who acted with him did not relax their efforts on behalf of the condemned man; in all likelihood the commutation of the death-sentence to banishment with confiscation of property may be ascribed to their active intervention.

Events of such a nature must have rendered the term of his office an anxious time for the Prefect of Rome. There was another and yet graver cause of anxiety,

[1] Cf. Chaix, i. 303. Yet the leanings of Arvandus towards the Goths can hardly have been altogether unknown to any of his acquaintances.

[2] It has been suggested by Martroye (*Genséric*, pp. 234–5) that Arvandus may not have been so stupid as he appeared, and that the correspondence with Euric may have been undertaken with the approval of Ricimer. The king-maker's privity to his treason would explain Arvandus' arrogant confidence on his arrival in Rome, as well as his sudden dejection, when he found himself left in the lurch by the powerful personage on whom he counted (cf. Prof. Bury's note in his edition of Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, iv. 44, n. 108).

less immediately conspicuous, but big with coming trouble. This was the increasing tension between Anthemius and his new son-in-law.[1] To any one gifted with political foresight, an ultimate rupture became day by day more certain; and it may be that the retirement of Sidonius [2] was hastened by his desire to leave Rome before fresh disasters broke on the ill-fated empire. This explanation of his final departure is perhaps as likely as that which would attribute his second return from Italy to something in the nature of honourable dismissal. It is possible, however, that, like Mr. Secretary Addison in 1717, this earlier literary statesman proved unequal to the routine of administration, and that the title of Patrician which he now received, was intended to cover any mortification at the premature close of his career; but the capacity for affairs manifested in the stage of his life on which he was now to enter, is rather against the supposition of actual failure. Whatever the causes of his retirement, Sidonius now bade farewell to secular ambitions; restored to the peace of Avitacum, he may well have reflected upon their vanity, and tasted the last bitterness of disillusion. It is a

[1] When the breach soon afterwards occurred Ricimer alluded Anthemius as *Graeculus*, while the emperor deplored the necessity which had made him give his daughter in marriage to a 'skin-clad barbarian' (*pellito Getae*). In 470 a rupture was averted by the intercession of St. Epiphanius, Bishop of Pavia; but in 472 Ricimer proclaimed Olybrius, and marched on Rome. Anthemius was slain, but after little more than a month the victor himself died (Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Encyclopädie*, s. v. *Anthemius*).

[2] It is generally assumed that he retired in 469. Fertig (i. 19) thinks he may have remained till 471.

probable conjecture that such reflections gave a more serious turn to a mind never irreligious, and that the evident change of his outlook on the world conditioned the event which was now to transform his life.[1] On the death of the Bishop of Clermont, Sidonius was invited by general consent to occupy the vacant throne, and he accepted the invitation.[2] Assuming him to have been born between 431 and 433, he was now about forty years of age.[3] The Letters contain no allusion to the circumstances immediately preceding this, the crucial event of our author's life. Nowhere does Sidonius allude to the invitation itself, of the persons who made

[1] A similar conversion occurred in the case of Sidonius' friend Maximus, who also was called to the Church by the voice of his fellow citizens (IV. xxiv. 1); cf. Fertig, ii. 6.

[2] He may have passed the lower ecclesiastical grades *per saltum* like Ambrose, who rose from baptism to the episcopate in a week (C. H. Turner, in C. M. H. i. 151).

[3] The length of the interval between the return of Sidonius from Rome and his entry into the Church depends upon the view adopted as to the date of his retirement from the prefecture. Mommsen reduces it to less than a year (*Praefatio*, p. xlviii). Schmidt seems to be of the same opinion (*Geschichte*, p. 264). Others, while accepting the date of departure from Rome as 469, consider that three years elapsed, and that the episcopate of Sidonius began in 472. They argue from the passage in VI. i, where Sidonius says that at this time Lupus had been a bishop for forty-five years; now Lupus was elected to the see of Troyes in 427 (cf. Chaix, i. 439; Dill, p. 179). Tillemont (*Mémoires*, p. 750), followed by Germain (p. 19), makes Sidonius' ecclesiastical career begin a few months earlier, at the close of 471, on the ground that when the letter was written he must already have been bishop some little time.

it, or to the arguments which they employed, though more than once he describes his new profession as having in a sense been forced upon him,[1] as indeed it had been forced upon many other men of birth and wealth alike in Italy, and in his own country, among whom St. Ambrose himself is numbered. It is not difficult to supply the information which he omits to furnish. In those troubled times, the Church had special need of leaders familiar with the traditions of high office, trained to public life, and possessed of ample fortune (see below, p. lxxiii). Such men were better able than any others to stand between their flocks and the imperious barbarian princes who, with every year, closed in a narrowing circle round the dwindling territory of Rome. The careers of a Patiens and a Perpetuus proved the wisdom of those who elected them: the career of Sidonius was destined to justify it in an equal degree. He probably accepted the office not only from the changed view of life which led him to despise worldly ambition, but also because he believed that it opened to him a prospect of useful action for the benefit of his fellow countrymen. He well knew the anxieties and labours which it would involve; long before his own ordination, he had been acquainted with some of the best among the Gallic bishops, and the arduous manner of their life. There can be no question of vanity or ambition in his acceptance. As far as worldly honour went, the ex-Prefect and Patrician had nothing to gain

[1] V. viii. 3 *Utpote cui indignissimo tantae professionis pondus impactum est.* Cf. VII. ix; VI. vii. This language, as Germain remarks, recalls that of St. Ambrose, when raised in a similar manner to the episcopal throne of Milan.

by occupying a bishop's throne; and Clermont was not even a metropolitan see.[1] Several letters written by Sidonius to other prelates soon after his election show that he was sincerely oppressed by the sense of his own unworthiness, and aware how little his previous life had prepared him for his new career; at the same time his health seems to have suffered, and a dangerous fever brought him almost to death's door (V. iii. 3). But he was cheered by the receipt of encouraging and kindly replies from several bishops of the Province; that of Lupus of Troyes[2], which is preserved, must have caused him peculiar pleasure, for Lupus was the most venerable figure in Gaul, and regarded with respect in every diocese.

Events were now moving to a crisis which was to put the character of Sidonius to the severest test, alike as patriot and as ecclesiastic. The hold of the empire upon Gaul continually relaxed. It had rewarded the friendship of the Burgundians by permitting great annexations of territory;[3] its enemies were never satisfied. Riothamus the 'King' of the Bretons, who had been entrusted with the defence of Berry with some twelve thousand men, had already been defeated by the Goths, whose ambition was an ever-present menace.[4] Count Paul, for a while the Roman commander, had

[1] The see of the Metropolitan was at Bourges.

[2] Baret, pp. 32–3.

[3] Cf. note, p. xxviii above. About this time Gundioc was succeeded by his brother Chilperic I, who had no children. Gundioc left four sons, called on Chilperic's death the 'tetrarchs': Gundobad ruling at Lyons, Chilperic II at Vienne, Godgisel at Besançon, and Gundomar at Geneva.

[4] Riothamus, to whom one of the letters (III. ix) is

checked with Frankish support their advance north of the Loire, but they now added to their dominion the northern part of Aquitanica Prima, with the cities of Bourges and Tours. While Euric's lieutenant Victorius made steady conquests in Aquitanica Prima he himself overran the country beyond the Rhône, which he was unable to retain on account of Burgundian jealousy.[1]

The fulfilment of his ambitions involved the absorption of Auvergne, the most loyal district which remained to the empire, inhabited by a war-like race claiming Trojan descent, a people which had fought with Hannibal, and, in the person of Vercingetorix, sent against Julius Caesar a captain worthy of his military genius. Their principality had been the most formidable in Gaul, and they had long enjoyed the reputation

addressed, foolishly provoked the attack of Euric and was crushed at Bourg-de-Déols on the Indre, not far from Châteauroux, whence he fled with the remnant of his force to the Burgundians. This may have been in 470, or perhaps in 469, for Euric's aggression was probably hastened by the failure of the Roman expedition against the Vandals in 468. Cf. Gregory, *Hist. Franc.* II. xviii; Jornandes, *Getica*, xlv; Dill, pp. 302, 316; Fauriel, v. 314; Schmidt, in C. M. H., p. 283.

[1] The Burgundians may even have driven him by force from this district (Schmidt, *Geschichte*, p. 377). It may be that Euric was to some degree influenced by a desire to avenge Arvandus and Seronatus, who had given him such practical advice. Except that he had not come to terms with the Burgundians, his present policy was that recommended by Arvandus in the famous letter which caused his condemnation (cf. p. xxxi above, and Fauriel, *Hist. de la Gaule méridionale*, i. 214).

of freemen and warriors.[1] Such men, whose leaders still desired Roman rule, even with the traitorous Arvandus and Seronatus [2] as the official representatives of the empire, were not likely to accept Visigothic domination without a struggle. Their country was apparently exposed for several years to a series of raids and invasions culminating in sieges of the city of Clermont,[3] whose people offered a most stubborn resistance, with Sidonius at their head. The bishop was no longer animated by the sentiments towards the Gothic monarchy which had inspired his eulogy of Theodoric II. Euric was a very different man from his murdered brother, more violent, less refined, less amenable to reason. He made no pretence of recognizing Roman supremacy; moreover his Arianism was of an aggressive type, and with Sidonius, whose Catholicism was orthodox and sincere, this was a factor which now weighed more than any other. The Arvernians, though at first they had conceived new hope from the accession of Nepos,[4] now began to fear that they looked in vain

[1] The claim of Trojan descent is more than once mentioned by Sidonius (cf. II. ii. 19; VII. vii. 2. Cf. also Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* IV. xxxi).

[2] Seronatus was perhaps governor of Aquitanica I (Schmidt, *Gesch.*, Part I, p. 261), where he openly acted in the interests of the Goths (cf. VI. i. 1; V. xiii. 1, 4; VII. vii. 2). He also was brought to justice, and lacking Arvandus' useful friendships, underwent sentence of death (cf. Chaix, i. 377).

[3] Arverni is the general form for Clermont, though Jornandes uses Arverna. The earlier name was Augustonemetum. When autumn set in the Goths raised the siege, and drew off into winter quarters.

[4] Cf. VIII. vii, addressed to Audax, Prefect of Rome.

towards the Rome for which they prepared to make the utmost sacrifices. As the year 474 advanced it was seen that without imperial support their position was hopeless. Sidonius had attempted to postpone the evil day by diplomatic means; Avitus, whose family name was so well known to the Goths, had been sent to intercede with Euric;[1] Ecdicius seems to have been dispatched to solicit aid from the Burgundians. But neither was able to prevent the horrors of continued siege. The defenders fought with tenacity; and though their walls were damaged, though fires destroyed whole quarters and they were reduced to extremities by hunger, they succeeded in holding the city. Their spirits were at one time raised by a heroic exploit of Ecdicius, 'the Hector of this Troy,'[2] who with a little band of eighteen troopers broke through the enemy's lines, inflicting heavy loss upon seasoned warriors, perhaps

Nepos, nephew of Verina, consort of the Emperor Leo, was proclaimed in Constantinople in 473, and landed in Italy in the following year, Glycerius being consecrated bishop of Salona. He only reigned a year and two months; in 475 he was dethroned by Orestes, who invested his own son Romulus Augustus with the purple. Nepos, at the beginning of his reign, appears to have endeavoured to rejuvenate the Civil Service, and secure a more efficient administration. But the effort came too late.

[1] III. i. 5. The efforts of Avitus may have been made in concert with Licinianus (Schmidt, *Geschichte*, as above, p. 265). The memory of the Emperor Avitus, the friend of the first Theodoric and instructor of the second, must still have been fresh among the Visigoths. This younger Avitus may himself have had a personal influence among them; the degree of his kinship to the emperor is unknown.

[2] Fertig, i. 12.

overcome by a momentary panic.[1] The privations of the city had been so severe, that a party was apparently formed in favour of accepting Gothic rule, a party perhaps recruited by Gothic agents, who no doubt reminded the suffering citizens that the exactions of Visigothic counts were not likely to exceed those of Seronatus. This was a move of which Sidonius perceived the peril. The tension of war was followed each winter by inevitable reaction. The Goths had burned the crops; and though the generosity of Patiens and Ecdicius, now and later, did much to relieve distress,[2] men stood among ruined homes and saw their families still suffering the pangs of hunger. The advocates of surrender had here a promising material to work upon, and Sidonius strained every nerve to counteract their efforts. He induced his friend Constantius of Lyons, a venerable priest whose name was held in honour in Auvergne, to visit Clermont.[3] The appeal was not in vain; though the winter weather was severe, the old man braved every inconvenience of the way, and by his cheerful presence and calm advice composed

[1] III. iii. The episode is also related by Gregory of Tours (*Hist. Franc.* II. xxiv), who allows Ecdicius only ten men. Ecdicius seems to have been successful, at some time during the operations, in bringing up Burgundian support (Chaix, ii. 176); he also engaged troops at his own expense (III. iii. 7).

[2] VI. xii. Cf. Gregory of Tours, loc. cit.

[3] This may have been done by letter. It is possible that the personal visit of Sidonius to Lyons and Vienne took place in some interlude between the sieges, though we may doubt whether he would have left the city at so critical a moment. Cf. below, p. xlii.

the differences and animated the courage of the people.[1] The bishop also instituted the solemn processional prayers or Rogations already used in time of peril by Mamertus, bishop of Vienne.[2] These also had a tranquillizing effect. But there was still a prospect that the siege might be again renewed, and all eyes were turned to Italy. Julius Nepos was alive to the danger that Euric might cross the Rhône; but weak as his resources were, he could only hope to secure peace by negotiation. The quaestor Licinianus, who had been sent into Gaul to investigate the condition of affairs upon the spot, had done little more than confer upon Ecdicius the title of Patrician, an honour which even at this anxious time highly gratified Sidonius, and filled Papianilla with delight;[3] he had now returned, and it was soon only too clear that hopes based on his inter-

[1] III. ii. This is the same Constantius to whom the earlier books of the Letters are dedicated.

[2] V. xiv; VII. i.

[3] The dignity had been promised by Anthemius. Several writers have remarked that though the Roman dominion was on the point of disappearing, and though the titles which Rome conferred were about to become emptier names than ever, Sidonius and Papianilla regarded the augmentation of the family honours as a matter of serious importance. In spite of the threatening aspect of affairs, they could not even now persuade themselves that Auvergne was really to be abandoned by the empire. Perhaps it was this ineradicable confidence in Roman stability which enabled Sidonius to write several cheerful letters during this time of suspense, e.g. III. viii and VII. i. We may note as an example of a similar confidence manifested by others, that a friend whom he asks to attend the Rogations is taking the waters at a bathing resort (V. xiv. 1).

vention were not likely to be fulfilled. Rumours of negotiations were in the air. We find Sidonius writing for information to those presumably in a position to receive early intelligence.[1] To this last period of suspense, if not earlier, may belong the visit to the Burgundian kingdom, when he was able to frustrate the machinations of the informers threatening Apollinaris.[2] He began to fear that something was going on behind his back, and that the real danger to Auvergne came no longer from determined enemies but from pusillanimous friends.

His suspicions were only too well founded. On receipt of the quaestor's report, a Council was held to determine the policy of the empire towards the Visigothic king. Four Gaulish bishops were empowered to enter into negotiations—Leontius of Arles, Graecus of Marseilles, Faustus of Riez, and Basilius of Aix. It is not easy to say whether they failed because they refused to surrender Auvergne; nor can we precisely define the relation of their mission to that undertaken on behalf of the emperor by the venerated bishop of Pavia. Schmidt considers that the embassy of Epiphanius took place when the negotiations of the four bishops had broken down, and that the treaty of 475 was ratified by him.[3] The empire did not feel strong enough to support Auvergne, and it was decided

[1] IV. v. [2] Put cf. p. xl, note 3.

[3] Schmidt, *Geschichte*, as above, p. 265. But if the four bishops made a firm stand for Auvergne, why was Sidonius so indignant with Graecus? The account of Epiphanius' proceedings given by Ennodius is uninforming (*Vita Epiph.* § 81).

to cede the whole territory to Euric, apparently without condition, unless, indeed, the Visigoth undertook that Catholics should receive fairer treatment, and that the disabilities from which they had suffered should cease.[1] If so, the contingent religious advantages of the treaty might ultimately have soothed Sidonius the Churchman, as the shame of surrender at first incensed Sidonius the patriot. But when the news of the decision reached him, he gave way to an outburst of righteous indignation, and wrote to Graecus, his intimate friend, a letter in which the bitterness of reproach is no less remarkable than the exalted tone of patriotism.[2] Sidonius loved Auvergne; among all the Gallo-Roman nobles none was more devoted to the imperial connexion than he; none attached more weight to the maintenance of Latin letters and Roman civilization. He was cut to the heart. All the valour of Auvergne had been thrown away: the treaty seemed an impossible, an incompre-

[1] Sees had been left vacant; churches were allowed to fall in ruins; cattle grazed about the altars (VII. vi). Gregory of Tours (*Hist. Franc.* ii. 25) says that bishops and priests were actually put to death, but it is doubtful whether things were pushed to this extremity; cf. Chaix, ii. 182.

[2] VII. vii. Hodgkin compares the protest of betrayed Auvergne with that of the city of Nisibis, surrendered to Persia by Jovian against the will of the inhabitants. The reproach directed by Sidonius against Graecus, that he considered nothing but his own interest, seems hardly justified. It is probable that as a result of the treaty, to which the Burgundians appear to have been parties, the whole territory between the Loire, the Rhône, the Pyrenees, and the two seas passed to Euric, who now possessed Aquitanica I and II, Novempopulana, Narbonensis I, and part o Lugdunensis III (Schmidt, p. 265).

hensible betrayal; the thought of it filled him with mingled shame and sorrow. The year 475, in which he ceased to be a Roman citizen, was the darkest year of his life.[1]

In the organization of his new territory, which he seems to have annexed without further opposition, Euric showed the qualities of a statesman. He appointed Victorius, a Catholic and Gallo-Roman, as Count of Clermont, a man whose piety Sidonius praises, but whose character is painted in a different light by Gregory of Tours.[2] He probably intended to act as fairly by his new Catholic subjects as violent prejudice would allow. But the conduct of Sidonius in encouraging so protracted a resistance at Clermont had incurred his sharp resentment. The bishop was imprisoned in the fortress of Livia, situated between Narbonne and Carcassonne.[3] There may have been some pretence of entrusting him with a special duty,[4] but probably the principal object of the victor was to keep him away from his people until the new government was fairly

[1] The treaty still left Rome the country between the Mediterranean and the Durance, and from the Rhône to the Alps; but a part of this at least was taken by Euric in 476, when he renewed the war, and drove the Burgundians beyond the Durance (Schmidt, *Geschichte*, p. 377).

[2] Victorius may have degenerated (cf. Chaix, ii. 304). Gregory (*Hist. Franc.* II. xx) states that he was obliged to fly to Italy; the young Apollinaris followed him (cf. note 3, p. xiv, above).

[3] In the Peutinger chart it is called *Liviana*, and placed twelve miles from Carcassonne. Cf. the *Index Locorum* in Mommsen's *Praefatio*.

[4] In VIII. iii and IX. iii Sidonius speaks of *officia* which occupied a great part of his day during his captivity.

established. Sidonius seems to have remained for some time within the walls of Livia, but to have undergone no great physical hardships, since his chief complaint is that he suffered from the chattering of two repulsive Gothic hags outside his window (VIII. iii. 2). He had a powerful friend at court in the person of Leo, Euric's Secretary of State, who only waited a propitious time to intercede for his unfortunate countryman, and meanwhile recommended him to occupy his mind by literary work.[1] It must have been due to the solicitations of Leo (VIII. iii) that the prisoner was at last removed, apparently on parole, to Bordeaux, where Euric was now holding his court; and here, among a crowd including members of numerous barbaric tribes, he was forced to wait the king's good pleasure.[2] Sidonius was ill at ease about his property, perhaps his loved estate of Avitacum, all, or part, of which had been seized during the recent disturbances.[3] He found it difficult to obtain justice; and in a letter to his friend Lampridius (VIII. ix), whose case was very different

[1] The task which he suggested was an edition of Philostratus' work in honour of Apollonius of Tyana (VIII. iii. 1; cf. Fertig, ii. 22). Sidonius had a far higher opinion of Apollonius than that entertained by the Catholic Church in later times (cf. note, 140. 1, p. 245). It is questioned whether he undertook a regular translation from the Greek, or merely a transcription, as Sirmond thought.

[2] Chaix thinks that Sidonius returned to Clermont on his release from Livia; and that the visit to Bordeaux was undertaken later, with the express object of presenting a petition with regard to his confiscated property (ii. 227).

[3] VIII. ix. The Visigoths, in accordance with precedent, probably appropriated a fixed proportion of the conquered

from his own, bewails the hardness of his lot; but the verses which accompany the letter are practically a panegyric of the Visigothic ruler, whose power they exalt to the skies.[1] As Lampridius was now a favoured personage in the king's entourage, the writer doubtless hoped that they would be brought to the royal notice, as indeed they probably were; the subsequent permission to return home, soon afterwards accorded to Sidonius, may well have been hastened by this timely resort to the arts of the court poet.[2] Euric was perhaps of opinion that his prisoner had now suffered enough, and would cause him no further trouble.

The bishop returned to Clermont in a despondent mood. The Patrician and ex-Prefect was brought low;

territory (cf. p. lvi below). But Sidonius' active share in the war may have led to the confiscation of his land.

[1] Sidonius may have been really impressed by the visible signs of Euric's power, and forced into a kind of enthusiasm, despite his private feelings. But the verses bear the signs of exaggeration, and historical evidence hardly confirms their claim that Euric was arbiter of the destinies of half the world.

[2] Another letter containing verses (IV. viii) addressed to Evodius was probably composed at Bordeaux. Evodius, who at a later time may have risen high in the Gothic service (Chaix, ii. 290), was presenting a silver cup to Ragnahild, Euric's consort, for which he desired a poetical inscription. Sidonius, who realized as fully as his friend the great influence wielded over their lords by the Teutonic queens, complied with a few couplets well calculated to attain their object. But in a tone of irony which betrays his real sentiment with regard to Teutons, he remarks at the end of the letter that the verses themselves hardly matter, since in the place where the cup is going there will be eyes only for the silver of which it is made.

the idol of his patriotism was shattered. He saw himself abandoned by the government for which he had willingly risked his life; he was the subject of a barbarian whose manners he despised and whose heresy he detested. There remained to him only his faith and his pastoral duty; and in time these were sufficient for him, leading him to those paths of sanctity which were to result in his canonization. But at first the new life was hard; Auvergne enslaved was no longer Auvergne to one whose youth was full of such memories as his. He threw himself with a high sense of duty into his episcopal work; several of his letters refer to events and meetings which occurred in the course of his diocesan visitations;[1] those which were written to aid clerks, deacons, readers, and others in need of his assistance prove that he did not spare himself when an opportunity came to help his neighbours or dependants. But in spite of all these activities, there must have been long and melancholy hours, especially in winter; and his friends feared their effect on his mind. They therefore encouraged him to write; and to this encouragement we probably owe the nine books of the Letters. The first book was issued in response to a request from the aged priest Constantius who had rendered him such noble aid after the siege of Clermont. It probably appeared in 478.[2] It was followed by Books II–VII, dedicated to the same venerable friend. Books VIII and IX

[1] Cf. the visits to Vectius and Germanicus (IV. ix, xiii; cf. Chaix, ii. 239, 241). He paid other visits beyond his diocese, e.g. those to Elaphius and Maximus (IV. xv, xxiv; cf. Chaix, ii. 234, 236).

[2] See below, p. cliii.

were supplemental, the first added to gratify Petronius,[1] though still dedicated to Constantius; the second by desire of another friend, Firminus.[2]

There can be no two opinions as to the wisdom of his friends. It is clear from more than one passage that Sidonius enjoyed rummaging among his papers for any letters suited for publication, and that to transcribe, correct and polish the pages written at various periods of his life provided just the distraction which he required. To the gradual process of publication may in part be ascribed the lack of chronological order in the Letters, which makes them appear inconsequent to the modern reader, though it is not the sole reason (cf. below, p. cliv). But Sidonius was not only asked for collections of his letters. His talent as a poet was still in request. If a new church was erected, a metrical inscription for the walls must come from his hand; if a notable person died, he must provide an elegy.[3] High ecclesiastic though he was, he was still expected by privileged persons to furnish occasional verses; and though he sometimes declined a request which he felt inappropriate, at others he could not find it in him to refuse.[4] He was also urged to write the history of periods falling within his own remembrance, a task which he was unwilling to perform.[5] But he occupied

[1] VIII. i. 1; xvi. 1. [2] IX. i, xvi.

[3] He says himself that after his entrance into the Church, his prose style suffered, but he was 'more of a bad poet than ever' (IV. iii. 9).

[4] Cf. the convivial verses written at a late period for Tonantius, son of Tonantius Ferreolus (IX. xiii).

[5] The request came from Prosper, Bishop of Orleans (VIII. xv).

himself with Commentaries on the Scriptures, and composed, among other religious works, certain *Contestatiunculae*, which appear to have been prefaces to the Mass. The loss of his religious writings makes it impossible to estimate his position among the doctors; Gennadius placed him without hesitation among their number.[1] His activities were not confined to composition; he also revised manuscripts. Thus we find him sending to Ruricius a Heptateuch collated by his own hand.[2]

Amid these manifold occupations, pastoral, literary, and scholastic, the later life of Sidonius wore away. In the words of his epitaph (see p. lii), he lived tranquil amid the swelling seas of the world (*mundi inter tumidas quietus undas*). He continued to write to his friends and to receive letters from them; it is thought some examples may date from 484, or even later.[3]

[1] *De scriptoribus ecclesiasticis*, xcii. The theological writings of Sidonius are not the only works of his which are lost to us. He mentions epigrams and satires from his pen—evidently composed in earlier life (cf. Chaix, ii. 310). In the verses included in the last of all his letters, he alludes to certain juvenile productions: *unde pars maior utinam taceri | possit et abdi!*

[2] V. xv; cf. Germain, p. 117.

[3] It is argued that he must have been writing after 480, because in a letter to Oresius (IX. xii) he says that he has given up secular poetry for three Olympiads, and the period of abandonment to which he alludes must be the year of his election as bishop. Mommsen, however, considers him to have died in 479 (*Praefatio*, p. xlix), in which Prof. Schmidt follows him (*Geschichte der deutschen Stämme*, p. 378). But his argument is chiefly based on a conjectural emendation of the vague date at the end of the epitaph (*XII Kal. Sept. Zenone imperatore*), and his conclusion appears to accord no better with facts than that of Tillemont (see next page).

This was an important year, for it marked the death of Euric, and the succession of a weaker ruler in the person of Alaric II. The disappearance of the great Arian may have relaxed in some measure the tension between the Catholic Gallo-Romans and their unorthodox rulers; but it prepared the way for the final subjection of Gaul under a single barbaric nation. The Franks soon afterwards commenced the advance which was only to end on the shores of the Mediterranean; in 486 Clovis ended the shadowy rule of Syagrius between the Loire and Somme, and prepared the way for a descent upon the Visigothic and Burgundian kingdoms;[1] Sidonius may even have lived to hear of this event.[2] The last years of his life are said to have been embittered by the persecution of two priests of Clermont, Honorius and Hermanchius, possibly representatives of the Arian heresy.[3] The story runs that they proposed

[1] The catholicism of the Franks was of great assistance to them in their final struggle with the Arian Teutonic tribes. There is no doubt that their orthodoxy led the Gallo-Roman population to favour their projects and to desire their supremacy, and that Alaric II regarded the Catholic bishops as formidable, if secret adversaries.

[2] Earlier authorities, the Benedictines (*Histoire litt. de la France*, ii. 557) and Tillemont (*Mémoires*, xvi. 274 and 755), were in favour of about 489 as the date of Sidonius' death. Gregory of Tours says that in Sidonius' lifetime the echo of Frankish arms resounded in Gaul, and that Arvernians desired their arrival in Auvergne: this seems to point to a period later than the battle of Soissons (cf. Germain, p. 181). It might also be contended that the references which Sidonius himself makes to advancing age seem difficult of explanation if he did not survive the year 479, when he would only have been about fifty (V. ix. 4; IX. xvi, line 45 of the poem. Cf. also Hodgkin, ii, p. 317).

[3] Gregory of Tours, *Hist. Franc.* II. xxiii.

on a certain day to drive Sidonius from his church, but a horrible fate overcame one conspirator, and the other for the moment desisted from aggression. Thus Sidonius, when his time came, was suffered to die in peace. He is said to have fallen sick of a fever, and to have been carried into the church of St. Mary, where he took an affecting farewell of his flock, and indicated his desire that Aprunculus should succeed to his office.[1] Little more is heard of his family after his death. His son Apollinaris is said to have been one of his successors in the see of Clermont.[2] The year of Papianilla's death is unrecorded; of her daughters, we know only the meagre facts with regard to Alcima related by Gregory of Tours. By the end of the sixth century the house which had played so great a part in Gaul was no longer known to history.[3] Sidonius was buried in the chapel

[1] Gregory, as above. On Sidonius' decease, the infamous Hermanchius usurped the bishopric, but was struck dead at a banquet while he was celebrating his success. Aprunculus, formerly Bishop of Langres (cf. IX. x), only held the see for a short time, being succeeded by Euphrasius, whose tenure was also brief. Cf. Gregory of Tours, *Hist. Franc.* III. ix, xii, xviii.

[2] Cf. p. xiv above, and Gregory, III. c. ii; Chaix, ii. 379. Placidina, the wife, and Alcima, the sister, of Apollinaris, are said by Gregory to have visited the newly-elected bishop and persuaded him that he did not possess the qualities required for the efficient government of the see; it would be better, therefore, if he withdrew in favour of Apollinaris. He agreed with them, and effaced himself.

[3] Gregory tells us that the younger Apollinaris had a son, Arcadius, whose daughter was named, like her grandmother, Placidina, and is mentioned by Venantius Fortunatus (*Carm.* i. 15, 45). It has been supposed that the family of Polignac represents the line of Apollinaris, but this is disputed.

of St. Saturninus at Clermont, and an epitaph of eighteen hendecasyllables, composed not very long after his decease, is quoted by Savaron from an early manuscript formerly belonging to the Abbey of Cluny, but now at Madrid.[1] At some time after the tenth century, the chapel having fallen into ruin, his remains were translated to the church of St. Genesius in the centre of the town, where they lay in a reliquary on the right-hand side of the principal altar. In 1794 the church was destroyed; it is not known whether the bones were actually burned within the Place de Jaude, or whether the reliquary was buried under the ruins of the demolished walls.

Such were the principal events in the career of Sidonius, Gallo-Roman noble, Prefect and Patrician, Visigothic subject, bishop and saint. His letters have been compared to a literary Herculaneum, preserving under the accumulated centuries the most varied evidences of late Roman provincial life.[2] We may gather from them a multitude of facts bearing upon the

[1] *Codex Matritensis*, known as C; tenth to eleventh century (see p. clii below; and cf. E. Le Blant, *Inscriptions chrétiennes de la Gaule*, I, no. 562). It is quoted by Sirmond, and by later writers on Sidonius, e.g. Germain, p. 36 (cf. Baret, *Introduction*, p. 101). The placing of this long metrical epitaph over his remains would probably have accorded with his own wishes. Did he not compose one of similar length for his grandfather's tomb, with the comment that 'a learned shade does not reject a poetic tribute' (*Anima perita musicas non refutat inferias*. III. xi)?

[2] But, as observed below (p. cli), the Letters have never ceased to be accessible, if only to a limited number of readers.

society, civil and ecclesiastical, of the time; and though the value of Sidonius as a chronicler is seriously affected by an upbringing which set more store on literature than on observation, the harvest is plentiful enough. He experienced life under such various aspects, and knew so many people, that he could not fail to present a picture of provincial society of the highest interest and importance. It was inevitable that he should see things in the light of his own times, and remain under the influence of his own environment. He does not say as much about common things and ordinary events as a modern historian would like to know; he is reticent, after the Roman manner, about his family. It was not an age which cared to talk much of private life, or to describe the usual scenes of city, farm and country-side; nor was it the age of confessions, confidences and apologies. Sidonius does not depict his inmost nature like Montaigne, though in many little touches, applied almost at random, he allows us to trace for ourselves a portrait which he would not himself elaborate. We must not therefore go to him either for the sociology of the fifth century, or for the more intimate aspects of life; his mind was absorbed in other things. But when all deductions are made, we shall still find in his pages much invaluable material even on the subjects which he disregards; while those on which he cared to be explicit receive from him more illumination than from any contemporary writer. This is especially true of the lives of the members of his own class, of the literary activities of fifth-century Gaul, and of ecclesiastical affairs. His hundred and forty-nine letters are addressed to a hundred and nine correspondents, including ex-prefects

and patricians, a minister and an 'admiral' of the Visigothic king, a Breton commander, and no less than twenty-eight bishops; while among the recipients of letters who did not hold ecclesiastical or secular office are to be found the student, the poet, the young noble, the country gentleman, the schoolmaster and the rhetor. So varied a list proves that the writer was a man whose wide acquaintance gives him a right to be heard as a representative of his time and country.

Many allusions in the Letters will be more intelligible if a few words are said in the present place on the general conditions obtaining in Gaul when Sidonius wrote, with especial reference to the classes from which his correspondents were drawn. And firstly in relation to his own class, the provincial nobles of senatorial houses.

Perhaps the point which first strikes us is that life on the great estates in the last half of the fifth century, at the very end of Roman power in Gaul, is just as Roman, and in some ways almost as secure, as in the times of Hadrian or Trajan. The noble has his town house and his country villa, the latter with its large establishment of slaves, its elaborate baths, and all the amenities of country existence as understood by Roman civilization.[1] In his well-stocked library he reads his

[1] Sidonius' description of Avitacum, with its fine baths, winter and summer dining-rooms, women's quarters and weaving-chamber, imitates Pliny's accounts of his two chief country-homes, the *Laurentinum* near Ostia, and the larger *Tusculanum* at the foot of the Apennines in the upper Tiber valley (*Ep.* II. xvii; VI. vi). It is rather curious that he makes no mention of his garden, though such must surely

favourite authors, writes himself in verse and prose, or maintains a continual correspondence with friends of equal wealth and leisure. For diversion, he hunts and fishes, or rides abroad to visit his neighbours; if interested in the development of his land, he goes round the estate, watches the work in progress, and is present at the harvest or the vintage.[1] It is the life of the cultured landed proprietor in a country at profound peace, where soldiers seem to be neither seen nor thought of, and the only sense of insecurity arises from the presence of robbers on the lonelier roads; but for the apparent predominance of literary over sporting interests, we might be reading of the English shires in the days of the Georges, when the carriages of nobles were stopped by highwaymen on Bagshot Heath. Yet the Visigoths had been established half a century in Aquitaine; the Burgundians were on the Rhône; the Franks were pressing upon such territory in northern Gaul as still retained a shadow of Roman authority. The barbarians encompassed the diminished imperial possessions upon three sides; even before the time of Anthemius and Euric, the empire must have been aware that they were bent on a further advance.[2] When we think of the apprehension caused in modern times

have existed. Pliny, on the other hand, is very detailed in his description of the gardens of his villas. He speaks of walks bordered with box and rosemary, topiary-work, a 'wilderness', fountains and marble seats, summer-houses, &c. (cf. also Sir A. Geikie, *The Love of Nature among the Romans*, pp. 132 ff.).

[1] Cf. II. xiv.

[2] Even Theodoric II had shown his desire of territorial aggrandizement in Gaul (Schmidt, in C. M. H. i. 283).

by the threatened invasion of one nationality by another, of the military preparations and the manifold precautions on every hand, it all seems at first sight very strange. The explanation is to be sought in the fact that, for the majority of the population, the possibility of change had no exceeding terrors. The small landowners and townsmen had suffered to such an extent from maladministration in the past, that they regarded the future with indifference; their own lot was no whit better than that of their fellows who had already passed under Teutonic sway. The Visigoths and the Burgundians had the best reputation among the barbarian peoples; they kept order with a strong hand; they endeavoured to assimilate what was good in Roman law and practice. Even the great landowner had only to fear a partial confiscation of his estates; but in most cases the acreage was large enough to leave him still in comfort, and in difficulties he would probably still have an appeal to some administrator of Roman extraction, like Leo or Victorius.[1] Under these circumstances

[1] It is generally held that when the Visigoths first settled in Aquitaine, they appropriated two-thirds of the tilled land, and one-half of the woodland, while such land as was not thus partitioned was divided equally between Goth and provincial. When the Goths annexed large new territories, the division probably became less ruinous to the Gallo-Roman, because the barbaric numbers had not increased in proportion to the fresh land seized (Schmidt, *Geschichte*, pp. 281, 287). For the Burgundian division, see Dahn, *Die Könige der Germanen*, vi. 56; and for the partition of lands in Italy by the Ostrogoths, cf. Dumoulin, ibid. p. 447. The Visigothic Code issued by Euric in 475, of which only a part is preserved, was drawn up by Roman jurists. It borrowed much from the provisions of Roman law with regard to property; with regard to moral

the Gallo-Roman noble might view the change in his allegiance without despair; though his income and his acreage would be diminished, he would still have his villa, and cultivators to work on his land; he would still live his leisured life. Only in Auvergne, perhaps, did loyalty to a tottering empire go the length of resolute resistance; even there, it is probable that a part of the population was lukewarm, and that ardour had to be assiduously fanned by enthusiastic loyalists like Sidonius and Ecdicius. Thus the change from Roman to Visigothic citizenship implied, for the noble, a comparative loss, and for the lower classes a possibility of actual gain: a Euric was less likely than a remote and helpless emperor to tolerate a Seronatus in his service. The Letters afford interesting confirmation of a certain tacit confidence in barbaric rule. One year Sidonius paid a round of visits to Roman friends living near Bordeaux and Narbonne; these friends are displayed to us reading and writing in their comfortable libraries, maintaining their luxurious kitchens, entertaining each other, and living a large life at their ease. Yet at the time every one of them had ceased to have any political concern with the empire; every one of them was a Visigothic subject. The fact speaks for itself, and it makes the point from which we started less strange than it at first appeared. If life continued almost in the old fashion,

offences, it retained much of the old Teutonic severity. From the time of Theodoric I, Gothic law had already begun to be romanized, but the effect of long contact with Roman custom was now much more obvious (cf. C. Zeumer, *Leges Visigothorum antiquiores*, 1894; L. Schmidt, *Geschichte*, pp. 296 ff.; F. Dahn, as above, vi. 226 ff.).

even across the barbaric frontier, why should there be panic on the Roman side, or terror as to what would happen when the line was finally abolished? Existence would be much the same for most men after the great change was made. The higher nobility would lose the honours of imperial office, for there would be no more prefectorian or patrician rank; the rude barbarians would be unwelcome neighbours; but there were ways of avoiding them, and after all, they were a small minority. The Gallo-Roman nobles would continue to pay each other visits and write each other elaborate letters; they would hold closely together, and neither Visigoth nor Burgundian would care to intrude on their society. The prestige of Roman culture would remain; things would go on as before. Their day would begin at its usual early hour, opening in religious families with a service in the chapel attached to the house,[1] followed by visits to particular friends. After nine o'clock, there would be outdoor and indoor games; if sport was pursued, the hawks or hounds would be taken out.[2] The company would perhaps adjourn to the baths, after which would come the *prandium* or midday meal, about 11 a.m.[3]

[1] e.g. at the house of Magnus at Narbonne (*Carm.* xxiii).

[2] Theodoric II, the Visigoth, who evidently conformed in many ways to Roman usage, hunted before the midday meal; he too began the day very early with a religious service, and then transacted state-business, which must have been over before 10 A.M. (I. ii). Sport with hawk and hound is mentioned in connexion with the beautiful country-house of Consentius near Narbonne (VIII. iv), and with the estates of Namatius, Euric's admiral in Oleron (VIII. vi).

[3] II. ix; villas of Tonantius Ferreolus and Apollinaris. For the disposition of the wealthy Roman's day, little changed

The hour of the siesta would be succeeded by a ride or other light exercise, and by the afternoon bath, preparatory to the *coena*, or supper, which would be enlivened by songs and music, or seasoned by cultured conversation. The barbarian might rule the land, but the laws of polite society would be administered as before.

The Letters enable us to follow in some detail the career of the Gallo-Roman noble from childhood to mature age. During his tender years he and his sisters were left to the care of the ladies of the family; at this period of their lives they remained in a seclusion almost resembling that of the Eastern *gynaeceum*.[1] From this seclusion the girl never really issued into the full light; she learned, as she grew up, to superintend and share the work of the *textrinum* (II. ii. 9); if she was skilful, like Araneola, she executed ambitious pieces of embroidery with figure-subjects (*Carm.* xv. 147 ff.); in the library,

from early imperial times, cf. J. Marquardt, *Privatleben der Römer*, p. 258.

[1] It is hard to say from the writings of Sidonius whether or not the Roman matron was still the commanding figure of the earlier empire. She was much occupied with domestic concerns: thus the wife of the wealthy Leontius of Bordeaux spins Syrian wool, and works embroidery (*Carm.* xxii. 195). But there are examples of ladies with intellectual interests. Sidonius expects Eulalia, wife of his friend Probus, to read his poems; and the expectation implies in her more than a slight tincture of letters (*Carm.* xxiv. 95). He tells a friend about to marry, that wedlock need imply no break in his literary work, since his future wife may encourage and aid his studies. Probably the influence of the *materfamilias* was none the less effective for being exerted in an inconspicuous way.

her place was where the religious books were kept (II. ix. 4), and sometimes, like Frontina, she attained at home a reputation of piety superior to that of nuns (IV. xxi. 4). The boy was permitted far more freedom; he played ball-games, and was initiated into the various forms of outdoor sport. As soon as he was old enough he attended the schools of his provincial capital, and learned to deliver 'declamations' before the rhetor, perhaps a man of distinction like Eusebius of Lyons, at whose feet Sidonius sat (IV. i). In his holidays, or on special occasions, the high official position held by his relatives might secure for him a good position at any spectacle or ceremony; we see the young Sidonius, when his father was prefect, pushing into the near neighbourhood of the consul Astyrius on the day of his inauguration (VIII. vi. 5). Released from the schools, he continued his sports, adding games of chance with dice, evidently very popular on all hands (II. ix. 4; V. xvii. 6, &c.). If a young man was rich and clever, or his family had influence, he went to Rome and entered the Palatine service, with the hope of rising to the high offices of the State. But his public life was usually over before middle age, and he retired to enjoy the honorary rank conferred by his late office. If he had no taste for further publicity he remained at home, read and wrote, followed his hounds, or acquired a taste for rural economics; kept up his classics and his ball-games; perhaps built additions to his villa. He might even grow too absorbed in rural interests to visit town even in the winter, like the Eutropius whom Sidonius rebuked, or the Maurusius whose company he so highly valued. Or he might advance a stage further, and think of

nothing else, till he was lost to all ambition beyond crops and stock, and sank into rusticity. There were many such in Gaul, and in more than one letter Sidonius alludes to them with regret or indignation.[1] But the more intellectual among the country gentlemen did not lightly forget the culture of their younger years. Literature probably occupied the class as a whole more than it has ever done in modern Europe. The Gallo-Roman noble was always a potential author, and valued himself as a critic. Verses and epigrams were circulated from house to house,[2] and the writers of these expected from every reader a letter of acknowledgement, which could be nothing less, under the circumstances, than eulogistic. The more earnest students would edit a classic, and keep copyists at work transcribing manuscripts for their shelves. In their houses the library was a very important room, and the scrolls and books were carefully arranged.[3] We receive the impression that the proportion of well-to-do people really fond of literature was high in the second half of the fifth century; and though the devotion to the classics in many ways recalls that of the Chinese

[1] I. vi; II. xiv. For Eutropius, who bade fair to become a 'country bumpkin', Sidonius draws an admonitory picture of the future, when the man who has allowed all his opportunities to go by, will have to stand in his old age silent at the back of the hall, an *inglorius rusticus*, while younger men, without his advantages of birth, sit in the front places and express their judgement.

[2] Verses were often enclosed or incorporated in letters until, as in the correspondence of M. de Coulanges, they must have seemed 'as numerous as Sibylline leaves' (Mme de Sévigné, Letter 1177).

[3] II. ix. 4, 5.

literate to whom the past is everything, the precedence given to literature over sport is a feature which commands our respect.

For all this, the more strenuous noble must often have found time hang heavy on his hands. He had few outlets for his energy; local politics were of the slightest interest to him; they were the affair of smaller men, and he had, as a rule, little notion of what we now call social service (see below, p. lxx). But his duties as father of a family were conscientiously performed; he sometimes himself took a part in his children's education.[1] Then there was the regular and voluminous correspondence with his friends, comparable, in the care lavished on style and diction, to the leisurely exchange of letters by persons of culture in the eighteenth century. Visits to friends living at a distance were also serious undertakings; we find Sidonius making 'rounds' which range from Auvergne to Provence, from Bordeaux to Lyons.[2] On long expeditions he took his servants, bedding, and all impedimenta; where there was no friend's house to offer hospitality, he camped (IV. viii), or, if driven to it, used an inn (II. ix. 7; VIII. xi. 3). Friends' houses stood open to each other, and liberal hospitality reigned. But though good cooking was evidently as general as in modern France, excess at table was rather the exception than the rule. Hospitality,

[1] Cf. IV. xii. 1.

[2] His friends are mostly of his own rank, but he may make exception in favour of rhetors or grammarians, a class whose company was eagerly sought in a society devoted to parlour-rhetoric. Cf. the cordial invitation to Domitius, the Grammarian of Camerius (II. ii).

however, was sometimes insistent, then as now; and in one place Sidonius confesses that after the opulent suppers of Ferreolus and Apollinaris a week's thin living will do him good (II. ix. 10). If the noble was a Christian, as was now very generally the case,[1] public religious duties played some part in his life. When a church was consecrated, or the feast of the patron saint came round, he made a point of attending the services, which sometimes began even before daybreak: at such festivals all classes came together, though they did not mingle, and the intervals between the services were occupied with games and conversation (V. xvii). Or he would prepare to set out with all his family on a pilgrimage to some important shrine, even when the state of the roads was dangerous (IV. vi). With these tranquil occupations his years passed by. But if he bore a high character and was popular with his neighbours, the quiet tenor of his life might be suddenly interrupted: he might wake one day to find himself elected bishop, and the most earnest *nolo episcopari* was not accepted as an excuse. If, on the other hand, the Church made no such claim upon him, he declined into a serene old age, and might have to listen in his own bed to those contradictory verdicts of the doctors whose quarrels in previous years disturbed his patience.[2]

[1] But even as late as the end of the fifth century the Christianity of some among the nobles was probably more a matter of conformity than conviction, as it had been with Ausonius at an earlier date (cf. Ausonius, *Ep.* ii. 15; X. xvii).

[2] Cf. II. xiii, where Sidonius speaks of doctors who conscientiously kill off their patients, and quarrel across the invalid's bed.

He died; but though veneration for the dead was a conspicuous virtue of his age, his family might forget for two generations to erect his monument, and when reminded by some accident of their duty, excuse each other by citing the irrelevant cases of an Achilles and an Alexander.[1]

Both in town and country, the nobles seem to have led a large and sumptuous existence, in no way inferior to that of their own class in Italy. The proud name of 'the lesser Rome of Gaul' which Ausonius applied to Arles,[2] is justified by the letters alluding to the sojourn of Majorian in that town. In one an imperial banquet is described; in another a private feast, given by an acquaintance of Sidonius.[3] In both cases the luxury is redeemed by an intellectual atmosphere, but the luxury is there, with all the *genialis apparatus* which contemporary extravagance required. There are the hangings of rich purple, the napery 'white as snow', the table-decoration of vine-tendrils and ivy; there are flowers in profusion. The guests recline, with balsam-perfumed hair, while frankincense smokes to the roof, and the very lamps are scented. The slaves bow beneath the burden of chased silver plate; choice wines flow in cups crowned with rose-wreaths. There is dancing, and music made on cithara and flute by Corinthian girls and other professional musicians. It

[1] Cf. Sidonius' *apologia* for the long neglect to erect a monument over his grandfather's remains (III. xii. 6).

[2] *Gallula Roma Arelas*: *Ordo urbium nobilium*, X. 2.

[3] The banquet of Majorian (II. xi) and that of a *sodalis quidam* at Arles during the imperial sojourn in the town (IX. xiii).

all suggests an evening with Lucullus rather than a dinner-party in a provincial capital. These were special occasions; but the general standard of life was clearly high. There is a picture of one Trygetius, so comfortable at Bazas amid the selected delicacies of his storeroom[1] that even the prospect of a gourmet's paradise at Bordeaux cannot drag him from home. A snail would outstrip this lazy personage, whom a comfortable boat awaits on the Garonne, with 'mounds of cushions', a grating to keep the feet dry, an awning to ward off the evening damp, dice and backgammon to pass the idle hours while, in frequent chants, the oarsmen sing his praise. Even the *delicata pigritia* of Trygetius, thinks Sidonius, must be tempted by this care for his comfort, all leading to a veritable tournament of epicures at the end. Who would imagine that when this invitation was sent, the homes of these Gallic Sybarites were in Visigothic territory, and that Theodoric was master of Bordeaux? Sidonius himself was comfortable enough at Avitacum, with his winter and summer dining-rooms, his elaborate baths, and his ball-ground down by the lake (see below, p. xcv); while the lordly villa of Consentius, the *Octaviana*, was probably more extensive still, with its porticoes and baths, its well-stocked library, its vineyards and olive-groves, where the visitor hardly knew which to praise most, the cultivation of the estate or that of the master's mind (VIII. iv).[2]

It is in many respects a singularly refined life, free,

[1] VIII. xii. *copiosissima penus aggeratis opipare farta deliciis.*

[2] *Difficile discernitur, domini plusne sit cultum rus an ingenium* (VIII. iv. 1).

as a rule, from coarse vice and brutality. But no one who reads either the letters of Sidonius, or any other work descriptive of the fourth and fifth centuries, can fail to be struck by a certain lack of broad aims or ardent interests. These men are less primitive than the barons of the Middle Ages, but in idealism and fervour the mediaeval knights leave them far behind. It has already been hinted that to find a parallel for some of these lives, absorbed in solemn literary trifling, we should have to look to the Far East, rather than to any European state. These members of the senatorial class[1] were possessed of enormous wealth, but they seem to have had little encouragement to expend any part of it for the benefit of their country.[2] They escaped the municipal taxation which they could well afford;[3] their chief use for surplus money was to lend

[1] The distinction of 'senatorial' rank had ceased to bear any direct relation to the Senate; the title implied the status conferred by the possession of a certain amount of landed property, or the previous tenure of some honorary office or dignity. After Constantine's time the class rapidly increased in the provinces (cf. J. S. Reid, C. M. H. i. 49).

[2] The Gallic estates were not so large as the Italian, but Ausonius had one, described as small, which exceeded a thousand acres; and the great nobles owned numerous properties. It may be assumed that Sidonius was a proprietor on rather a large scale. Symmachus is thought to have had about £60,000 a year of our money; if Sidonius had only a third of that amount, he would still be a wealthy man according to our ideas. The really opulent members of the senatorial class had anything between £100,000 and £200,000 a year (cf. Dill, p. 126).

[3] Though they paid a land-tax (*follis senatorius*), the *aurum oblaticium*, and other taxes imposed in the province where they resided (cf. J. S. Reid, C. M. H. i. 50).

it at twelve per cent., and if possessed of business instinct, to foreclose their mortgages.[1] Thus they had come to possess nearly the whole superficial area of a country which they were not even supposed to defend. If they wished to commit illegal acts, they could often set themselves above the law. Provincial governors were amenable to hospitality and open to social influence; a Seronatus could be persuaded to sanction courses which the distant emperor would not have tolerated. Judges were even more exposed to improper influence; the powerful noble had probably little difficulty in wresting a judgement, if he had the mind to do so. The base arts to which some members of the senatorial class descended to evade their share of taxation, or fill their pockets at the expense of a defrauded state, disclose a code of ethics for which too often public duty was a phrase without a meaning.[2] The honourable men among them—a Tonantius Ferreolus, a Thaumastus—might discountenance such ignoble practices, and lead the province in an attempt to obtain the punishment of a bad governor. But they were in a minority, and the evil grew despite their efforts. It is difficult to understand how the nobles spent the princely incomes which, by fair or unfair means, were always increasing.

[1] The mortgagor generally became dependent on the mortgagee. In this relation may be sought one of the beginnings of the feudal system (Dill, p. 218).

[2] Cf. Dill, pp. 224 ff. The less scrupulous among the senatorial class, indirectly engaged in commerce though trading was forbidden to them, patronized usurers and fraudulent creditors, winked at dishonest action on the part of their agents, and overbore the lesser officials of the state by their local prestige.

In modern times, with continual demands upon his purse for all kinds of public objects, with the competition for expensive works of art, with a thousand and one objects of use or luxury daily forced upon his notice, it may be supposed that the magnate can keep expenditure within range of income. But the Roman millionaire, at any rate in the provinces, had no great and steady drain on his resources unless he was a devout man and prepared to erect or restore churches as a practice. He might spend considerable sums on his houses and baths; but as labour was cheap, if not unpaid, and as there is a limit to construction, even building on a large scale would not seriously diminish an income equivalent to £50,000 a year. A few, like Magnus or Consentius, might buy pictures or other works of art, but the sums paid for them can hardly have been comparable with those given for old masters to-day, nor do we gather from the Letters that the love of art was really intense, or widely disseminated in Gaul. The chief intellectual interest was literary, and however enthusiastic it may have been, it can hardly have depleted a senatorial purse. There were manuscripts to buy, but, it may be conjectured, not at the prices of the modern sale-room; and the rarer illuminated books were not yet collected by the competitive methods of our day. If then there were no hospitals to endow, no large yachts to maintain, no subscription lists to head, on what did the provincial millionaire spend his money? He could only entertain on a very lavish scale when resident in a town like Arles. He gambled, but not, as far as we know, on the heroic scale. He patronized the chase, but hunting was then a cheap pursuit. The milliners' and jewellers'

bills which he had to pay can hardly have caused him much embarrassment; the weaving, and probably the making, of his wife's clothes was done by the maids of the house; and it may be doubted whether, in an age when diamonds were practically unknown, the most expensive jewellers could send him an inconvenient account. His estate was self-supporting; those who tilled it largely worked for nothing or were recompensed in kind;[1] all the food and all the fuel required for his household came from his own fields and woods. 'Clients' cannot have been ruinously expensive where food was cheap. He had only to feed and clothe his domestic servants, not to pay them wages.[2] The

[1] A great part of the estate was tilled by slaves; and such part as was cultivated by *coloni* must have yielded the landowner a very handsome profit. Some labour was paid by wages, but not a high proportion (J. Marquardt, *Privatleben*, p. 139).

[2] Probably the relations of the average master to his servants were as a rule not unkindly: but there are exceptions, both good and bad. The admirable Vectius has a devoted household (IV. ix. 1); the violent Lampridius is murdered by his slaves (VIII. xi. 11). Sidonius was almost certainly a good master, though once at least he shows excitability (IV. xii. 2). An interesting Letter (V. xix) deals with the abduction of a freed woman by a man in the servile state. Sidonius, from whose house she had been taken, insists with Pudens, whose slave the abductor was, that the man should be also freed and so be promoted from the class of *coloni* to that of plebeian clients (*mox cliens factus, e tributario plebeiam potius incipiat habere personam quam colonariam*). The tenth Letter of Book IX is also of interest in this regard. Injuriosus, who may have been a clerk, left Sidonius for Aprunculus, bishop of Langres, without ceremony and without the proper *litterae commendatoriae*. Sidonius stipulates that

answer to the question probably is that the rich provincial noble did not and could not spend his income; year by year he became richer and ever more uselessly rich.

That he did so was but one count in the indictment against the Roman system of provincial government, which threw such burdens on the middle class and the lower class of freemen, that the vigour of both was sapped, and the spirit of enterprise crushed out of existence. It is unnecessary in the present place to dwell upon the notorious evils of the Curial system,[1] which gave the *decurion* all duties and no rights, and the senatorial class all rights and no duties. We need not linger over the folly which encouraged useless wealth and useless lives in a class which, reasonably handled, might have become a bulwark of the State. The noble had no useful work to do. His tenure of quaestorship, vicariate or prefecture once over, he had no further career. He could not serve in the army; he was not

if the offender should ever treat Aprunculus in a similar way, both of them should prosecute him as a fugitive servant.

[1] The reader will find references to the principal works on the subject in Dill, p. 208; cf. also C. M. H. i. 52; J. Marquardt, already quoted, *Römische Staatsverwaltung*, i. 92 ff. For the municipality, see Prof. J. S. Reid, *The Municipalities of the Roman Empire*, 1913. The decurions had not only to control municipal finance, but were responsible for the collection of imperial taxes. They had liabilities in connexion with enlistment for the army, and with the maintenance of the posting service on the great roads. During the fifth century the imperial government made worthy efforts to improve jurisdiction and administration, but over-centralization neutralized their effect in the provinces, where old abuses persisted and reforms were not easily applied (cf. C. M. H. i. 396).

supposed to found an industry. There was no scope for active brains except in literature, and literature was now of such a kind that its propagation was of doubtful advantage to the world. We can hardly wonder if men unmanned, as it were, by statute failed the empire in its need, or if the great proprietor made his estate his world, and cared little for events beyond his boundaries. He had become a fly upon the wheel of government, brilliant perhaps, but an insect still, and adding no momentum. Sidonius belonged to the best of his order; he and his relations loved their country, and were prepared to sacrifice everything for it. But custom held them bound; they had no chance to prove themselves until it was too late.

The Roman empire opened its own veins. But there was now within it an organism which drew to itself new blood, and amid the general enfeeblement of old institutions, grew daily in vitality. The Church succeeded to the neglected opportunities of the State. While the secular arm relaxed, the Church enlarged her power, and drew the people to the one rallying-point that remained to them amid the increasing disruption of society. 'In the civil world', said Guizot, many years ago, speaking of the fifth century, 'we find no real government; the imperial administration is fallen, the senatorial aristocracy fallen, the municipal aristocracy fallen as well. It is a tale of dissolution everywhere. Authority and freedom alike are attacked by the same sterility. In the religious world, on the other hand, we see an active government, an animated and interested people. Excuses for anarchy and tyranny may be numerous; but the liberty is real,

and so is the power. On all sides are the germs of an energetic popular activity and of a strong executive. This, in a word, is a society marching towards a future, a stormy future fraught with evil as well as good, but full of power and fecundity.'[1] Here is the root of the matter: the Church had a future and a present; the State had only a past. While the imperial officials were too often regarded as instruments of tyranny, whose only relation to the mass of the people was external and oppressive, the leaders of the Church were in constant touch with national and individual life. Their homes were in the towns; their houses were open to all in trouble. Instead of being the common enemy, the bishop was every one's friend,[2] he stood in a regular relation to the municipal body, and exercised certain judicial rights of his own.[3]

[1] *Hist. de la civilisation en France*, ed. 1846, i. 91. For the organization of the Church, see C. H. Turner, in C. M. H. i. 145. For the Catholic Church in barbaric territory, see F. Dahn, *Die Könige der Germanen*, vi. 367 ff.; L. Schmidt, *Gesch. der deutschen Stämme*, Part I, p. 300 f. Of Arian organization, either in the Visigothic or the Burgundian State, practically nothing is known.

[2] We see from VIII. xi (line 8 in the poem) that visitors to the town who could not find accommodation with their friends sometimes expected the bishop to find room for them. Many letters show the bishop in a most pleasant light as mediator in family disagreements, or as patron of worthy aspirants.

[3] The Constitutions of 408 gave bishops civil jurisdiction in their dioceses (C. M. H. i. 396). Several passages of Letters in Book VI illustrate episcopal influence. As Baret remarks, Sidonius always seems to assume that the *pondus* of the bishop will settle the matter when it is placed in the scale.

Moreover, he controlled the Church lands in his diocese, and had thus a power of the purse which necessarily increased his consideration at a time of general impoverishment. It is not astonishing that under such circumstances the prestige of the bishop steadily rose. In the time of Sidonius, the episcopate was already moving towards the emancipation attained in the sixth century; but as yet the occupants of the Gallic sees were men of such high character that there was little abuse of their expanding authority. The Letters bring no such charges of violent and unseemly conduct as those which are scattered through the pages of Gregory of Tours.[1] The bishops of the expiring fifth century were powers in the land and powers for good, mitigating the hardships of a dangerous epoch, and standing forth in the public eyes as the true representatives of national life. They were indeed almost the only conspicuous figures who were visibly doing national work, and the fact was widely recognized. Good men of wealth and standing, condemned to inaction by the absence of any secular career, must have cast envious eyes upon this episcopal office which enabled its holders to serve their country so well; the hierarchy and the people, equally alive to the importance of strengthening the Church by the admis-

[1] Cf. *Hist. Franc.* IV. xii; V. xxi. Sidonius does not conceal his sentiments when he finds ground for disapproval of the clergy, as in the case of the dissentient priests at Bourges (VII. ix. 3). In IV. viii. 9 he implies that many who wore clerical garb 'imposed upon the world', and that he personally inclined to prefer the man 'who is priestly in morals to one who merely bears the priestly title'.

sion of such valuable recruits, did not discourage their aspirations.[1] The Church was not so ill-advised as to imitate the State in debarring from a share in her activities the very men who could render the greatest service; she gave the nobles a ready welcome, not merely because they were rich, though riches were desirable, but because they were likely to possess, in a more eminent degree than others, the high culture and the great manner which the long habit of receiving deference conferred. The Church had room, as historians have observed, for two types of bishop. She needed, on the one hand, the learned pupil of the monasteries, the theologian, preacher, and disciplinarian. She needed, on the other, the man born to great place, imposing respect by personal distinction, and a commanding figure in any company. She appreciated a Faustus, pursuing as bishop the austerities which he had practised as a monk; she welcomed Remigius and Principius, sons of a count, and the wealthy Patiens, who could combine simplicity in his own life with a lordly openness of hand and the most gracious arts of hospitality (cf. VI. xii. 3). The aristocratic bishop could serve her best not only in her relations with imperial officials, whose day was almost gone, but also with the barbarian princes, whose favour grew more important with every year. As the empire was ever further dismembered, and the Church provided the one bond of union between the subjects of isolated kingdoms, the diplomatic bishop continually proved his

[1] It was the same in the case of men distinguished in the professions: Germain of Auxerre was once a soldier; Lupus of Troyes an advocate.

worth. The Visigoth and the Burgundian were impressed by his culture and his experience of the world; moreover, they were by tradition disposed to favour high birth. There was thus a general tendency to elect a certain number of aristocratic personages to vacant sees, and a corresponding readiness, on the part of the worthier noble, to look with favour on such election, seeing, as he could not fail to do, that the one way to be of use was to become a bishop. It was therefore no unprecedented event when upon the death of the Bishop of Clermont, Sidonius found himself called to succeed by the voice of his fellow countrymen in Auvergne. The call came perhaps too suddenly; it appeared rather a summons than an invitation; but the recipient of it was more ready for the change than he supposed himself to be. And in spite of the misgivings which crowded upon his mind, he must have seen ground for hope in more than one direction. In leaving the aimless existence of the provincial magnate for the living work of the Church, he joined an organization which now assumed a commanding influence over the whole moral and intellectual field; to throw himself with ardour into its work was to aid the one force in the land which made for regeneration. The Church appealed also to the scholar and man of letters. The only original philosophical speculation of the day was carried on by theologians like Faustus and Claudianus Mamertus, who had persuaded Philosophy into the service of Religion (IX. ix. 12).[1] To rhetoric the Church offered the one chance of effective action; the orator in the pulpit could feel that he was not

[1] Cf. IV. iii; and Chaix, i. 438.

delivering a class-room declamation, but reaching the hearts of men. The preacher could treat the great subjects of life, not as themes for academic display, but with a purpose of practical reform; the eloquence of a Remigius carried away great congregations; the pulpit had succeeded the rostra, it alone spoke to an assembly of the people.[1] Even the education of the young was beginning to pass into the control of the Church: in the monastery of Lerins a school was established by Faustus, at which a brother of Sidonius was trained (*Carm.* xvi. l. 70).[2] The old education was doomed to pass with the passing of the empire; it was a survival, unfitted for the coming age. The people at large had no interest in the exercises of rhetors and grammarians; they turned from them to other teachers. And among these the former pupil of Hoënius and Eusebius now took an honoured place.

We may briefly notice a few allusions in the Letters to those ecclesiastical matters with which the second part of Sidonius' life was so largely concerned. Great as the influence of the bishops had become, it is clear that it was still in some measure controlled both by the general voice of the laymen, and by that of the priesthood, now a body apart, and more definitely severed from the community than in early Christian times.[3] We mark the survival of these two factors,

[1] Cf. the effect produced by the address of Faustus at the consecration of Patiens' new church at Lyons (IX. iii. 5).

[2] For Church schools, see G. Kaufmann, *Rhetorenschulen und Klosterschulen*, &c., in Raumer's *Historisches Taschenbuch*, Ser. IV, vol. x, 1869, pp. 54 ff.

[3] For the growth of the influence of the Church as a body, cf. C. H. Turner in C. M. H., as above, pp. 145, 152, 155.

the popular and the priestly, in the interesting accounts of the episcopal elections at Bourges and Châlon (VII. ix; IV. xxv). We there find the popular vote still regarded as an integral part of the proceedings, while some of the diocesan priests give vent to strong opinions of their own, not always coincident with the episcopal point of view. But in both cases the bishops, though recognizing the traditional popular claim, succeed in carrying their point. They hold a private meeting at which they agree upon their candidate and it is this candidate who is elected.[1] The consecration of a new bishop at Châlon is carried out by Patiens and Euphronius in a masterful manner; at Bourges, Sidonius delivers a formal address calling upon the people to accept Simplicius. At Bourges,[2] indeed, the electors seem to have recognized the necessary confusion where 'two benchfuls' of unscrupulous men were all urging their claims to a single throne (VII. ix. 2). When one aspirant based his hopes on his kitchen and his dinners, and another on a promise to divide Church property among his supporters, the evils of popular election became apparent to all responsible laymen: they abrogated their claims in favour of the bishops, whose selection they agreed to accept. Such cases

[1] If the bishops of the province could not attend, the canon provided that those of neighbouring provinces should be summoned. Thus at Bourges, Sidonius invites the co-operation of Agroecius of Sens. Cf. Chaix, ii. 22.

[2] Bourges had been in Gothic hands since about 470. Of the bishops present at the election, two came from territory which was still Roman, one from a diocese in Burgundian territory. The fact illustrates both the universal character of the Church, and the tolerance of the barbaric governments.

probably illustrate as well as any examples could, the evil tendencies which necessitated a change of system.[1] And the people were not alone in the responsibility for undesirable episodes on these occasions. At Bourges the priests openly favoured promotion by seniority rather than by merit, and Sidonius was obliged to administer a sharp rebuke. It is plain that in the late fifth century a tightening of the bonds of discipline was inevitable, and this could only be effected by the bishops.[2] The intense and factious excitement aroused on the occasion of an episcopal vacancy affords yet another proof of the importance attaching to the bishop's position. A see was worth fighting for; so much so, that the prize attracted candidates whose motives were sometimes entirely base.[3] Perhaps in the years preceding the disasters of A.D. 474 there had been a certain laxity in the religious life of Gaul. Sidonius alludes to public devotions in which the prayers were too much interrupted by refreshments (V. xiv. 2);[4] the dicing and other amusements interspersed between the services at the festival of St. Just seem in rather

[1] For the gradual elimination of the popular element see C. H. Turner, as above, p. 152.

[2] Though the authority of Rome was unquestioned, throughout the Letters there is no mention of appeal to, or intervention by, the Pope.

[3] In the sixth century, though the Frankish kings exerted an influence over the elections, scandals continued to occur, if not quite in the same way as at Bourges and Châlon (Gregory of Tours, *Hist. Franc.* IV. xxxv; VI. vii, xxxviii).

[4] *Erant quidem prius, quod salva fidei pace sit dictum, vagae, tepentes, infrequentesque, utque sic dixerim, oscitabundae supplicationes, quae saepe interpellantum prandiorum obicibus hebetabantur.*

too close an alternation with the devotions of the day (V. xvii).[1] There may have been in many places an excessive preoccupation with the material side of life, which affected even those whose office it was to inspire thoughts of the opposite kind. An Agrippinus in holy orders harassing his sister-in-law on money matters is not a pleasant figure (VI. ii). Nor can we approve the apparent toleration of money-lending in the case of priests (IV. xxiv). But against such examples may be set others of a very different kind, which show that there was a strong leaven of piety and devotion both among clerics and among laymen. In the monasteries there was severe self-discipline, and many of the distinguished monks or abbots who were taken from Lerins to fill the sees of Gaul, carried into their new spheres of activity all the monastic rigour to which they had been accustomed.[2] The Syrian monk Abraham, who after being driven from his native country by

[1] Sometimes festivals were protracted for many days. That which celebrated the consecration of Patiens' church lasted a whole week (IX. iii. 5 *festis hebdomadalibus*). Cf. the long festival at Gaza: G. F. Hill, *The Life of Porphyry, Bishop of Gaza, by Mark the Deacon*, 1913, ch. 92.

[2] Thus Lupus of Troyes transferred to his diocese prayers in use at Lerins (IX. iii). The austerities of Faustus have been already mentioned. For the development of monastic life in the West in the early Christian centuries, see Dom Butler in C. M. H. i. 531 ff. There was no ordered code or written rule, except the short rule of Caesarius of Arles, until the seventh century. Before that time the eremitical type of monachism practised in Egypt and Syria prevailed, sometimes with the extreme austerities habitual in the latter country. It is even doubtful whether Honoratus wrote a rule for Lerins.

Sassanian persecution, had finally settled down at Clermont (see below, pp. lxxxiii, civ), afforded another example of renunciation,[1] which produced its effect even upon Victorius, Euric's Count of Auvergne (VII. xvii. 1). Vectius, the noble who maintained his place in the world while secretly practising a devout life, is, as Dill has observed, a character which might be taken from Law's *Serious Call* (IV. ix). The ex-quaestor Domnulus, a friend of Sidonius, goes into retreat in the monasteries of the Jura (IV. xxv). Simplicius, while a young man, straitens his resources by building a church, Elaphius builds a baptistery in Rouergue (IV. xv).

It is natural that we should learn more from Sidonius of the contemporary bishops than of the lower ranks in the Church, since it was with them that he had chiefly to correspond. Many attractive figures pass before us, some already familiar, as having their recognized place in the history of their age. There is the aged Lupus of Troyes (S. Loup), the doyen of Gaulish bishops, who in spite of advanced years and many anxieties, received the news of Sidonius' election with fatherly satisfaction, and, for all his saintliness, was human enough to take umbrage at a supposed breach of literary etiquette (IX. xi). There is Remigius (S. Remi), the apostle of the Franks, to whose glowing eloquence

[1] Cf. Gregory of Tours, *Hist. Franc.* II. xxi, and *Vit. Patr.* iii. In Bk. VI, ch. vi, of the former work, Gregory alludes to the miracles of the saintly recluse Hospicius of Nice, who in the second half of the sixth century made his usual diet of bread and dates, and in Lent subsisted on roots brought in merchant-ships from Egypt. In Gregory's time Auvergne still contained hermits practising extreme asceticism.

Sidonius bears his testimony (IX. vii). There is Faustus, the daring theologian of the day, and leader of a semi-Pelagian school in the south of Gaul, whose work on Free Grace was condemned by Pope Gelasius, and whose anonymous treatise on the Materiality of the Soul elicited the *De Statu Animae* of Claudianus Mamertus.[1] There is the learned Graecus of Marseilles, whose part in ratifying the treaty of surrender drew from Sidonius the bitter reproach of outraged patriotism, but did not ultimately affect the friendly relations between them. There are St. Euphronius of Autun, Leontius of Arles, Perpetuus of Tours, Basilius of Aix, and many others less known to posterity.[2] Finally there is Patiens, for whom Sidonius is the sole authority, the saintly and generous bishop who relieved the distress even of those living far beyond the limits of his own diocese, and rebuilt on a magnificent scale the old church of the Maccabees at Lyons: for him, as bishop of his native town, Sidonius may well have felt an almost filial affection. Of the 'second order' in the Church, the priests, we hear comparatively little. The most distinguished

[1] IV. ii, iii. Tertullian, Jerome, and Cassian had given support to the doctrine thus proclaimed by Faustus, and Augustine had taken a prominent part on the other side. A chief argument used by Faustus was that to call the soul of man immaterial is to claim for it a quality belonging only to God (cf. Dill, p. 184). For the treatise of Faustus, see Gennadius, *De Script. Eccles.* 85. In Engelbrecht, *Corpus Script. Eccles. Lat.*, the treatise and Claudianus Mamertus' reply are printed together.

[2] Among them Fonteius, Auspicius, Agroecius, Principius, and Aprunculus, the successor of Sidonius at Clermont.

among them is the above-mentioned Claudianus Mamertus, the religious philosopher of Gaul, who combined high speculation with orthodox belief, while at the same time aiding his brother Mamertus, Bishop of Vienne, in almost all the practical work of the diocese, from the receipt of the revenues to the training of the choir (IV. xi). Most other priests whose names are mentioned in these pages are names and nothing more; it is a matter for regret that there is no portrait of the parish priest and his activities, such as the most literary bishop of Gaul could so well have drawn for us on his return from one of his extended visitations. Of the inferior orders, one or two deacons ('Levites') are briefly introduced. Proculus, a pupil of Euphronius, is praised as reflecting in his manner something of the urbanity of his master Principius (IX. ii); a more unfortunate Levite, who, driven from home by the barbarian incursion, has sown a crop on church-lands in the diocese of Auxerre, finds a ready advocate in Sidonius, who begs of Bishop Censorius the remission of the payments due (VI. vii). Two Readers (*lectores*) also find mention in these pages, one, the impudent Amantius, several times, and once at great length; the other, an unnamed person engaged in commerce, whom the influence of Graecus is to convert from a small trader into a 'splendid merchant' (*splendidus mercator* (VI. viii). Of the monks in Gaul Sidonius gives but scanty information. An Abbot Chariobaudus receives a gift of a cowl for winter use (VII. xvi); but though allusions are made to the great houses of Lerins and Grigny, and to the smaller houses of Condat and Lauconne in the Jura, the Letters give us

no details of monastic life.[1] We only learn that on the death of the monk Abraham, the founder of St. Cirgues at Clermont, his successor had not the qualities which maintain order, and Sidonius asks his friend Volusianus to act as a kind of Superior without the walls (VII. xvii); perhaps in the founder's time these monks followed an oriental custom, and Volusianus was now to introduce the stricter rules of Lerins or Grigny. It was at St. Cirgues that some ill-conditioned person removed Sidonius' book when he was conducting a service, with the vain idea of causing him embarrassment (Gregory, *Hist. Franc.* II. xxii), a rather curious little episode, which, if really founded on fact, throws an interesting side-light on the maintenance of monastic discipline. The house ultimately became a priory and lasted till the close of the eighteenth century.[2]

Though as a young man Sidonius was familiar with the court of Theodoric II at Toulouse (I. ii), no small part of his experience among the barbarians was gained when he had become a bishop. We have seen that after his imprisonment in the fortress of Livia, he

[1] It has been already noticed that previous to their election to the sees of Troyes and Riez, Lupus and Faustus had both occupied the position of Abbot of Lerins. Hilary of Arles and Eucherius of Lyons had been members of the same community. A brief description of a visit paid by Sidonius to Lerins is given in *Carm.* xvi. 105 ff., and the visit is alluded to in IX. iii. For Lerins, cf. note, 80. 1, on p. 239. Cf. also VI. i; VII. xvii. 3; VIII. xiv. 2; IX. iii. 4. For the Jura monasteries, see note, 47. 2, p. 235.

[2] Chaix, ii. 224.

seems to have been compelled to wait the king's pleasure at Bordeaux; and in the course of his efforts to recover his lost property, he must have been brought into contact with various members of the Visigothic administration. It was at Bordeaux that he saw those representatives of the different barbarian tribes whose personal characteristics he has described, some of them captives like himself, others rendering voluntary service to a dreaded master. At both periods of his life he must have been familiar with the Burgundians, whose territory even in his youth was at no great distance from his native town. But in their case also, the acquaintance which was so distasteful to his fastidious mind was renewed at a later time after they had entered on the possession of Lyons. His female relations continued to reside in that city; and he went there after his entry into the Church, to see not only his family, but also the Burgundian king who stood with Rome against the aggression of Euric.[1] It must have been painful in the extreme for one to whom Roman culture meant so much, to hear the guttural voices of the barbarians in the streets where in his young days he had passed to and fro with his Latin classics; to see 'skin-clad' guards at the gate of the praetorium where Rome had displayed the symbols of her power, and, penetrating to the halls built for an imperial magistrate, to be welcomed by the gross good-humoured chieftain whom Patiens conciliated by excellent dinners (VI. xii. 3). Sidonius paid his court, as duty to his people compelled him to do; he took the opportunity of interceding for his

[1] V. vi, vii.

kinsman Apollinaris, threatened by the malevolence of the informers who now infested the barbarian capitals; but, all the time, the iron must have entered into his soul. Like his brother-in-law Ecdicius, who in like manner had frequented these same halls, he must have suffered from a keen sense of humiliation. There was but one consolation, that however unrefined the Visigoth and the Burgundian might appear by comparison with the Roman standard, they were humane and civil compared with the pagan Frank and the fierce piratical Saxon of the north.[1]

It was indeed the peculiar good fortune of central and southern Gaul that the two peoples which here succeeded to the Roman inheritance were the best of all the conquering Teutons. The Visigoths belonged to a tribe which had now been in contact with imperial civilization for generations and had adopted much from Roman law and custom; the Burgundians, though outwardly less civilized, were the most genial and good-natured of all the German nations. The great drawback to both lay in their common profession of the Arian heresy, but for which the Gallo-Romans might have acquiesced far more readily in their dominion, and the ultimate triumph of the Frank would hardly have been

[1] But in their family relations both the Visigothic and Burgundian royal houses were guilty of murderous brutality. It has been noted that Theodoric II assassinated his brother Thorismond, and was in turn assassinated by Euric. Gundobad the Burgundian in like manner murdered two of his brothers, destroying at the same time the wife and children of Chilperic under circumstances of such cruelty that public opinion became indignant, and Sidonius' friend Secundinus, the poet of Lyons, wrote a satire against the king (V. viii).

so rapid.[1] Religious fanaticism apart, and this only flamed fiercely in the ten years of Euric's reign, the relations between provincial and barbarian were those of mutual tolerance.[2] Neither Visigoth nor Burgundian was animated by any inveterate hostility to Rome. They had been confirmed in possession of their present territory by imperial sanction;[3] it had been their earlier ambition to rank as *foederati*; the Burgundian king was even now proud to hold rank under the empire.[4] It was impossible even for the most exclusive Roman citizen to forget that the fabric of the empire had been preserved by barbarian arms, and that the great Stilicho was a Vandal. Nor could personal charm be denied to those Teutonic leaders who had learned the arts of Roman life. In Italy itself there had been conspicuous examples; and though the portrait of Theodoric II in I. ii is perhaps overdrawn for a temporary political purpose, his manner of life was tolerably civilized. The Goths and Burgundians were prepared to treat the Gallo-Romans without violence; but they were determined ultimately to dominate the whole of central and southern Gaul. Before the time came for the full satisfaction of that ambition, they were as a rule inclined to live peaceably with their neighbours;

[1] The hostility of the clergy was always a danger to Alaric II before the final conflict with Clovis (cf. L. Schmidt, *Geschichte der deutschen Stämme*, p. 302).

[2] Dill, Bk. IV, chs. i and ii.

[3] The Visigoths had been granted Aquitanica Secunda and Toulouse by Honorius. The Burgundians were established south of Lake Leman by Aëtius.

[4] Cf. V. vi. 2, where Chilperic is described as *magister militum* (V. vi; cf. VII. xvii).

meanwhile they were subjected to a continual process of Romanization,[1] their new relation to the land and their inferior knowledge of agriculture alone making them to a great extent dependent on Roman law.

On their side, the Gallo-Romans were used to the presence of the northerner in their midst. The individual Teutonic peasant or slave had been a familiar figure in their households or on their farms since the days when the military emperors had distributed thousands of prisoners over the land. It was recognized, not by the fiery Salvian [2] alone, but by the average inhabitant, that the barbarians had their good qualities, and that in blunt honesty and the sense of justice the Teutonic chief might excel the Roman official. When the imperial system degenerated beyond redemption, when a Seronatus succeeded an Arvandus, and the extortions of the tax-gatherers were hardly to be borne, the perception became general that life might

[1] Cf. L. Schmidt, *Geschichte*, p. 271. Prof. Schmidt considers that the Visigoths treated the Gallo-Romans almost on a footing of equality before the law (ibid. p. 279), while the Burgundians certainly conceded equal rights (ibid. p. 403).

[2] Salvian, holding a brief for barbaric integrity against Roman corruption, may exaggerate the virtue of his clients; but his attribution of hospitality, chastity, and honesty to various tribes was probably founded on contemporary experience. He does not altogether close his eyes to their faults, styling the Goths perfidious, and the Franks untruthful. (For Salvian, see Hodgkin, i. 504.) Ammianus (XXII. vii) confirms Salvian on the national perfidy of the Goths (XXII. 7); and it is interesting to note that after the Frankish Conquest the Goths were regarded as poor fighting men, shunning close quarters, and relying on the bow (Gregory of Tours, *Hist. Franc.* ii. 27, 37).

be more tolerable in Septimania, or under Chilperic than under the jurisdiction of Rome. Except in Auvergne, where among a section of the inhabitants loyalty to Rome was a passion, the country was being gradually prepared for the inevitable transference of sovereignty. The poor man often longed for the change; the rich man resigned himself to unavoidable fate. The one felt that his lot could not be worse; the other saw that the civilized life of ease might be led almost as agreeably at Toulouse or Bordeaux, which had been Visigothic for half a century, as in the cities remaining to the empire (cf. above, p. lxv). It may be added that even as fighting men the barbarians did not inspire universal terror. The intruders were in a numerical inferiority which increased with each fresh annexation, and the Gallo-Roman could remember more than one occasion on which, man for man, Roman warriors had proved their equals.[1] Moreover the barbarian tribes were not united against Rome. The Burgundian was jealous of the Visigoth, and even lent troops to Auvergne to assist in opposing his advance. Perhaps the worst feature in the situation was the general suspense; the uncertainty when the blow would fall paralysed such public life as remained. The administration continued to deteriorate; the officials were openly dishonest. The roads were insecure.

[1] As already noted, Avitus' son Ecdicius showed, during the last struggle for Auvergne, that the race of heroes was not extinct (III. iii). Under Gothic rule, Gallo-Romans were probably exempt from military service (see note 64. 1, p. 238), but they served in the Burgundian ranks (Schmidt, *Geschichte*, p. 40).

Fugitives from unjust usage established themselves in fastnesses and seized on all property which could be carried off.[1] They were joined by bankrupts, runaway agents or cultivators from the great estates, in short by every one to whom the lawless life appealed. Rome was ceasing to maintain order; she had to make way for a power which could.

Perhaps when the blow did fall, it proved, for a time at least, more serious than the sanguine had expected.[2] Euric was an intolerant Arian; the passive or active resistance of the Catholic clergy provoked him to harsh treatment of individuals, while he prevented new appointments to sees left vacant by death or deprivation. Churches fell in ruin; bereft of their pastors, flocks were scattered.[3] He was further incensed by the obstinate resistance of Auvergne; his troops burned the crops and devastated the country, thus causing the most widespread distress. But as soon as the treaty was concluded and Berry and Auvergne were his own, he in some measure justified the hope that the Goths would establish a reputable government. He already had at his right hand, as

[1] Cf. VI. iv. 1. The *Vargi* in many ways resembled the Bagaudae of an earlier time. Cf. Salvian, *De Gub. Dei*, v. 24, 25; Sirmond, *Notes*, p. 65; Dill, p. 315; Hodgkin, ii. 104.

[2] But at its worst how different from the fate which ultimately befell our own country (cf. Haverfield in C. M. H., pp. 378 ff.; C. W. C. Oman, *England before the Norman Conquest*, Bk. III, ch. xi).

[3] Sidonius says that Euric was not so much the prince as the chief-priest of his nation (VII. vi. 6 *ut ambigas, ampliusne suae gentis an suae sectae teneat principatum*).

prime-minister, the Catholic Gallo-Roman Leo;[1] he now set over the conquered Auvergne another Gallo-Roman, Victorius; and we may perhaps assume that the episcopal negotiators of the treaty had secured from him better conditions for the Catholic population under his rule (see above, p. xlii). As a whole, the newly acquired territory settled down under Visigothic laws, in which, as we have seen, much Roman law was now incorporated.[2] A sensible loss to the senatorial families was that of the 'consular', 'prefectorian', and other titles derived from their passage through the *cursus honorum*. As Sidonius says, the only distinction now was culture, so that the jealous maintenance of Roman literature and the purity of Latin speech became more than ever important.[3] A few nobles followed the example of Leo and Victorius, and took high office under the new régime, as they did in like manner at the Burgundian courts.[4] Evodius, for whose presentation-cup to Ragnahild Sidonius wrote his verses (IV. viii), may have succeeded in pushing his fortunes in this manner. Other conspicuous Gallo-Romans were perhaps content to ingratiate themselves

[1] Leo probably combined in his own person the functions of the Quaestor Sacri Palati (the highest legal officer) and the *magister officiorum* or head of the Civil Service (cf. Schmidt, C. M. H. i. 290).

[2] For the Visigothic administration of justice, with its twofold system for Goth and Gallo-Roman respectively, see L. Schmidt, *Geschichte*, pp. 295–6; for the Burgundian, ibid. p. 423.

[3] Cf. II. x; IV. xvii.

[4] Syagrius, if not an official, was a *persona grata* at Lyons (V. v).

with their prince by the arts of flattery: such was Lampridius, the orator and poet of Bordeaux (VIII. ix).[1] The baser sort found their advantage in becoming informers, and trading in the properties and lives of their fellow countrymen.[2] Their machinations were in one case thwarted by the interventions of Chilperic's queen, whose support was of such worth to Patiens. The respect which the Teutonic princes and peoples showed to their women was a virtue which did much to make them respected by their Gallo-Roman subjects.

Probably Sidonius came into close personal relations with no barbarians other than the Visigoths and Burgundians; of the rest he had a glimpse during his sojourn at Euric's court (see below, p. cix), or only knew by hearsay.[3] His experience was gained in the most favourable field; but it is clear that though in younger days he had followed his father-in-law's pro-Gothic policy, and though as a Visigothic subject he schooled himself to civility, the intensity of his Roman sympathies never suffered him to like even the best of the barbarians. In a confidential letter he makes the confession that he does not care for barbarians even when they are good (VII. xiv. 10). He despised them as lacking in the refinements of the one culture in which he believed. The personal habits of the Burgundians

[1] Sidonius' rather fulsome poem on Euric reached the king's eyes through being written in a letter to Lampridius, who was intended to exhibit it (VIII. ix). Cf. above, p. xlvi.

[2] V. vi, vii. Sidonius' denunciation of these men, though written in his most artificial style, breathes a genuine and righteous indignation.

[3] So, perhaps, the Vandals, whose raiding habits he describes in the Panegyric of Majorian (ll. 386 ff.).

revolt him,[1] he indulges in a subdued sneer at the culture of the Visigothic court: the quality of the silver of Ragnahild's cup, not that of the verses engraved on it, will alone be esteemed 'in such an Athenaeum' (cf. above, p. xlvi). The barbarians are always the skin-clad savages (*pelliti*), as compared with the Romans in their civilized dress.[2] In a time of strained relations, the Visigoths become the perfidious people (*foedifraga gens*), in whom no reliance can be placed (cf. p. lxxxvii, note [2]). This ingrained dislike on the part of Sidonius is an unfortunate circumstance for the historian of the barbaric nations. He was in a position which offered him priceless opportunities to observe not only the outward appearance of a few types casually seen at Bordeaux or Lyons, but the daily life of the community. He might have learned to converse with them, given us examples of their speech, told us their proverbial wisdom, their legends and their history. He did none of these things. The apostle of Latin idiom would not soil his lips with the detested German tongue. An Athenian, forced to learn Persian under a victorious Xerxes, would not have suffered more than this Patrician, if Visigothic had been made a compulsory language in vanquished Gaul. It is clear that he only half admires

[1] VII. xiv. In *Carm.* XII. vi he asks how he is to write verses in six feet, with seven-foot giants all about him. The Burgundians also greased their hair with rancid butter, had enormous appetites, and spoke in stentorian tones. The poem is translated by Fertig (Part ii, p. 17).

[2] We may recall Anthemius' complaint (cf. p. xxxiii above).

the cleverness of a Syagrius who became so proficient in the Burgundian dialect that old men were afraid of being detected by him in solecism (V. v. 3).

It is a great opportunity lost.[1] But though he falls lamentably short of what he might so easily have accomplished, Sidonius has left several sketches of barbarian types which are not without their value to the student of history and ethnology, or even to the literary man. It was probably at Lyons that he saw the young Frankish (?) prince Sigismer in his rich apparel, walking amongst his guards to the house of his prospective father-in-law, the Burgundian Chilperic (IV. xx). The description is full of interest, and has attracted the attention of every historian of the fifth century; so circumstantial is it that though the nationality of Sigismer is not stated, it may be fairly inferred from his equipment and his arms.[2] But, as already noted, it was during his enforced stay at Bordeaux that the Bishop of Clermont had occasion to observe the various representatives of the northern tribes who pressed upon one another at the court of the powerful Euric (VIII. ix). There he saw the swift Herulian with his glaucous countenance;[3] the blue-eyed Saxon 'arch-pirate', terror of the coasts;[4] the grey-eyed Frank with his shaven face, yellow hair, and close-fitting tunic;[5] the Sigambrian, shorn of his

[1] Hodgkin has accentuated this point (ii, p. 372).

[2] See below, note 35. 1, p. 233. Chateaubriand, in *Le Martyrs*, adapts Sidonius' description of the Franks.

[3] Cf. *Carm.* vii. 236. Cf. note 155. 2, p. 247.

[4] VIII. vi. 15, and cf. *Carm.* vii. 369.

[5] *Carm.* vii. 236: also *Pan. Maj.* 210 ff.

treasured back-hair.[1] His knowledge of Mongolians probably dates from an earlier time, and is not displayed in the Letters; it may chiefly have been derived from Avitus, who knew the Asiatic nomads well from the days of Attila, Aëtius, and Litorius. What Sidonius has to say of them is to be found in his Panegyric of Anthemius, where he praises the horsemanship of troopers who seem rather centaurs than men separable from their mounts.[2] From hearsay also may have come the extremely interesting description of the Saxons, 'who regarded shipwreck as only so much practice.' Their maritime skill and enterprise are told in a few vigorous phrases, while their custom of offering a human sacrifice before setting sail on the homeward voyage is recorded as a fact of common knowledge.[3] Taken as a whole, these contributions to our knowledge of the Teutonic tribes are well worth having, though, for the reasons given above, they at the same time disappoint us, knowing as we do the unique nature of his opportunities. After all, great allowance must be made for a writer who had championed a lost cause against these very peoples of the north. The representative of a high civilization who fears that all refinement is going down before the flood of barbarism cannot be expected to regard the barbarian with the same sympathetic interest as the conqueror or pioneer

[1] VIII. ix, ll. 28 ff. of the poem. The term 'Sigambrian' is used generically for the tribes of the lower Rhine (W. Schultze, *Deutsche Gesch.* ii. 38), and the present captives may have been taken during some expedition of Euric's troops against the Franks.

[2] *Carm.* ii. 243.

[3] In the letter to Namatius, VIII. vi.

who carries the banner of the higher culture into the wilderness in the confident assurance of its triumph. Had Sidonius accompanied a victorious Roman army to the shores of the Baltic, he might have looked upon the Teuton with other eyes, and developed some of the observant qualities of a Tacitus or a Lafitau. And yet, when we remember his silence on his own countrymen of the lower classes, we may perhaps doubt whether, even under stimulating conditions, he would have made a good scientific observer. The whole education and training of the Roman school were such as to make the scientific attitude almost impossible to the finished product of the system.

Before turning to consider that system and its effect upon the literary talent of Sidonius, we may pause briefly to consider the information which he supplies on several external aspects of Gallo-Roman civilization in the last years of the imperial connexion.

We may take, in the first place, his description of his villa Avitacum, evidently modelled upon Pliny's accounts of his own favourite country seats. In some parts this description is hard to follow, and the relative position of the principal chambers not quite easy to understand. We imagine, however, an extensive structure designed with all the Roman regard for aspect; with a winter dining-room provided with an open hearth, and summer dining-room, half out of doors; with colonnade and loggia, weaving-room, women's quarters, and very extensive baths.[1] The

[1] Perhaps there were sleeping-rooms for the daily siesta as well as for the nightly rest, as was the case at the villa of Caninius Rufus on the shores of Como, described in one

baths were clearly a great feature of Avitacum. The house almost abutted upon an eminence, from which a stream flowed down, while the same hill provided timber for heating in such convenient fashion that the cut logs rolled down the steep slope, and almost delivered themselves at the furnace-door.[1] The different chambers used by the bathers, some of which were adorned with frescoes, are described in some detail; one had a pyramidal roof; another a basin filled from pipeheads cast to resemble lion-masks, through which the water comes in such a tumult that the master of the house and his fellow bathers have to converse at the top of their voices to be heard. Sidonius clearly prided himself on his baths, saying that they need fear no comparison with public establishments.[2] The house of

of Pliny's letters (*Ep.* I. iii). The account of the open apartment at Avitacum looking out on the lake, where the guest might sit in contemplation at any hour, suggests a place adapted for the siesta.

[1] As excavations in more than one country sufficiently prove, the hypocaust was commonly used for other rooms beside the bath. Cf. *Carm.* xxii. 188, where the *hiberna domus* of Leontius is described; here the wood-fed furnace *spargit lentatum per culmina tota vaporem*—in fact, central heating.

[2] He mentions also the baths in the *Octaviana* of Consentius at Narbonne, and those in the *Burgus* of Leo near Bordeaux (*Carm.* xxii.).

Almost more interesting than Sidonius' description of these elaborate structures, is the account which he gives of the extemporized vapour-baths used by him at Vorocingus and Prusianum, where the baths of his hosts were for some reason unavailable. He there caused a pit to be dug and enclosed by an arched roof of wattling, upon which coverings

Avitacum must have been a charming place, situated on rising ground with a wide prospect over a lake, perhaps the Lake of Aydat (see note, 36. 2, p. 222); it is not wonderful that the owner should describe it with enthusiasm. But there are curious omissions in the description of its amenities. It is remarkable that so bookish a man should say nothing of his own books, though he could certainly have quoted Cicero's words about his library (*Ep.* VI. viii), and in another letter dwells at some length on that of a friend. Again, while there must have been extensive gardens round such a residence, not a word is said of them, though, here again, the gardens of a friend are praised in another place. How different Pliny, who dwells with delight upon his fountains and trim walks, his cypresses and roses! We are tempted to doubt whether Sidonius really loved flowers.[1] Nothing, again, is said of stables; nor is there a word of domestic pets: we doubt Sidonius as

of Cilician goat's-hair were laid. Red-hot stones were placed in the pit and upon these warm water was thrown, with the result that the improvised chamber was filled with vapour. In this the bather sat for some time, receiving when he came out a douche of cold water. The whole procedure recalls that employed in Russia, the East, and in primitive America (cf. note, 52. 2, p. 225). For the general arrangement of Roman baths, see Daremberg and Saglio, *Dict. des ant. grecques et rom.* i. 651; Marquardt, *Privatleben*, pp. 279 ff. It is interesting to contrast Sidonius' descriptions of Roman country-houses with what he has to say of the palace of Theodoric II at Toulouse (I. ii). There he describes a large hall of audience, a treasure-chamber, and a stable, but nothing is said of any baths.

[1] But cf. *Carm.* xxiv. 56 ff., where the garden of Apollinaris is mentioned.

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a lover of animals. Yet, for its freshness and solitude, Avitacum was evidently near to his heart; there he enjoyed the *tunicata quies*,[1] which to the Roman was the equivalent of the ease in 'flannels' so delightful to the city dweller of to-day. We gather that the villa of Avitacum was as undefended as Roman country-houses usually were. But it is a sign of this unsettled period that some seats were already fortified, rather, perhaps, to resist sudden attack by brigands than assault by barbarian invaders.[2] We learn nothing precise from the Letters of the architectural features of town dwellings. It would have been interesting to know the disposition of the houses in such a place as Lyons, and how those of the chief citizens resembled the larger residences in Italy on the one side and Britain on the other.[3]

[1] Leaving off the toga was one of the first delights of country life. Pliny (*Ep.* V. vi. 45) says of one of his haunts *nulla necessitas togae* (cf. Juvenal, *Sat.* iii. 171).

[2] The Burgus of Leontius was fortified. Dill (p. 310) notes the fact that in isolated cases such fortification seems to have begun at the time of the Visigothic settlement in Gaul. The remains of the castle built by Dardanus, Prefect from 409 to 413, were identified by an inscription found on the spot (C. I. L. xii. 1524). Cf. Fauriel, *Hist. de la Gaule méridionale*, i. 560. The foundation of these strongholds in difficult country heralded the approach of a feudal system.

[3] The absence of information about the towns themselves is also disappointing. Several allusions show that they were protected by walls: thus Vienne (VII. i. 2) and Clermont (III. ii. 1). The mention of the statues in the forum at Arles is interesting (I. xi. 7), and the allusion to the deer which took refuge in the forum at Vienne (VII. i. 3) seems to show that the forum of that place still stood in the late fifth century.

Of the interior furnishing of the house, little is said; apart from the description of baths, what details we have concern almost exclusively the dining-room. Here were the *stibadium* (horseshoe couch) and 'gleaming sideboard' (*nitens abacus*); here couches for the diners, decked perhaps, like those of Theodoric, with linen coverings on ordinary days, and silk on great occasions (I. ii). The best accounts of dining-room arrangements are given where Sidonius describes the banquets at Arles already mentioned (p. lxiv). In I. xi the arrangement of the company on the *stibadium* in strict order of precedence is clearly noted, the host being at one 'horn', his principal guest at the other, followed by the remaining guests in order of their official rank, so that the junior (in this case, Sidonius himself) reclined next to the host.[1] The poem of IX. xiii enters with some detail into the luxurious accessories of a Roman banquet in the capital of the province. The couches are draped with hangings of purple silk, or with figured silk textiles bearing representations of mounted huntsmen in Sassanian style,[2] which proves the importation of oriental stuffs into the West as early as the mid-fifth century (see note, 203. 1, pp. 251–2). There are flowers on the sideboards and even on the couches. Burning frankincense rolls its perfume to the roof; the

[1] For Roman dining arrangements, see Marquardt, *Privatleben*, pp. 302 ff.

[2] Or at any rate with subjects familiar on Sassanian textiles of the sixth to eighth centuries. Similar motives, however, were favoured in other places in the Near East, among others probably in Alexandria (O. von Falke, *Kunstgeschichte der Seidentextilien*; Berlin, 1913).

lamps, knowing nothing of common oil (*oleum nescientes*), are fed with scented opobalsamum. When the feast begins the servants appear, bowed under the weight of the chased silver plate.[1] Wine gleams in rose-wreathed cups and bowls of various form, and is spiced with nard. When the meal is done, some of the guests are stimulated to the imitation of Bacchantes, and dance among garlands that hang from the unguent-vases.[2] But the chief entertainment comes with the introduction of Corinthian girls, who sing to the accompaniment of the cithara, and of other flute-players and singers. It is a scene of lavish extravagance. The midday meal of a senatorial family in every-day life is described as consisting of dishes few in number but varied in contents; the evening meals seem to have been more elaborate (II. ix. 6, 10). A high standard of comfort and a good cuisine were evidently the rule. Introducing to Simplicius a person unused to the manners of society (IV. vii), Sidonius pictures the man's astonishment when invited, as the acquaintance of so old a friend

[1] Silver plate, as we should expect from a wealthy Roman writer, is often mentioned. Theodoric's was unostentatious (I. ii); but there were families who thought more of their old plate than of being useful in the world (VIII. vii. 1). A silver cup with fluted sides, like a shell, is considered an appropriate gift for Ragnahild, queen of Euric (IV. viii. 4, 5). Sidonius is silent as to his own plate; to Gregory of Tours we owe the story that in the time of greatest distress at Clermont the bishop disposed of his silver to relieve the poor (see p. cxlviii).

[2] *Iuvat et vago rotatu | dare fracta membra ludo, | simulare vel trementes | pede veste voce Bacchas*: lines 64–7 of the poem. It is here implied that even the costume of the Bacchante was assumed.

as himself, to sit at the family table: 'it will abash this rustic to be entertained with an elegance which will make him think himself among the delicate guests of Apicius, and served by the "rhythmic carvers of Byzantium".'[1] The one indispensable article of furniture, not necessarily placed in the dining-room, which receives special mention is the water-clock or *clepsydra*;[2] even here, however, it is in one case brought in as having announced to the chef the hour for lunch. Of bedrooms nothing is said: one passage rather leads us to suppose that sleeping accommodation was less extensive than we should have expected (II. ix. 7).

Such artistic references as occur seem to show that Sidonius, though fond of all refinement, was not a connoisseur.[3] It may perhaps be surmised that provincial art in Gaul in the second and third quarters of the

[1] The reference probably is to carvers who officiated with a studied style and flourish, as if they worked to music (see note, 15. 1, p. 230).

[2] II. ix. 6, xiii. 4. For the *clepsydra*, see note, 51. 2, p. 224.

[3] His visits to Rome inspire him with no desire to dwell upon the artistic treasures of the capital. He dismisses the frescoes in his baths with the remark that there was nothing in them to offend modesty. K. Purgold has shown that most of the descriptions in his poems which seem to suggest observations of works of art are really borrowed from Claudian and other Roman poets (*Claudianus und Sidonius*, 1878). Some of these are elaborate, but in no case does the poet speak with enthusiasm or evident personal comprehension. In *Carm.* xxii he enumerates frescoes and pictures in the house of Pontius Leontius rather in the style of an abstract inventory, and without any critical appreciation: the chief subjects were: Mithridates sacrificing his horses to Neptune;

fifth century resembled the literature of the same period, and that its work was uninspired and imitative, coldly reproducing at second-hand traditional classical models. It probably did not share the great prestige accorded to literature; though Sidonius mentions a score of contemporary orators and poets, artists are to seek in his pages. The wealthy Gallo-Romans may have chiefly concentrated their enthusiasm upon Letters, and have regarded art as a secondary matter. Such comparative indifference could only have hastened the downfall of the academic Roman style before the invading oriental motives which now entered Gaul in increasing numbers, and were naturally more congenial to barbaric taste. Of sculpture we learn even less than painting. The author gives no description of his own statue erected at Rome after the delivery of his Panegyric of Avitus, nor does he allude to the sculptor. His mention of stereotyped attitudes when enumerating the

an episode from the siege of Cyzicus; the infant Hercules strangling the serpents; and (an interesting point) episodes from Jewish history. In the epithalamium of Polemius and Araneola (*Carm.* xv. 159 ff.) a number of classical episodes are woven by Araneola on a *toga palmata* for her father, themes perhaps derived from familiar pictures.

Sidonius refers more than once to encaustic painting (VII. xiv. 5; and Panegyric of Majorian, l. 590). The description of the mosaics in the church of Patiens is difficult (see notes, 54. 1, 55. 1, pp. 225-6). But whatever the exact translation of the author's words may be, it seems certain that no figure-subjects were depicted, but only ornamental or conventional designs, in which the colours of blue and green preponderated. As Hodgkin has observed, their parallels may perhaps be sought in some of the purely decorative designs in the mosaics of churches at Ravenna.

principal philosophers of antiquity (IX. ix. 14) suggests that he had well-known sculptural types in his mind, but he does not himself assert it. On the subject of architecture Sidonius does not seem to write with understanding. The account of the villa of Avitacum is not that of an expert; and his descriptions of two churches, that erected by Patiens at Lyons (II. x) and that by Perpetuus at Tours (IV. xviii. 4) are rather slight: we do, however, gather that the first was an orientated basilica, preceded by an atrium, and with a coffered ceiling in the interior,[1] though there is no clear statement as to the number of aisles or the form of the *bema*. The second, which replaced the older building erected by St. Brice over the shrine of St. Martin, seems to have presented most exceptional features; it may have introduced into Gaul a type of choir which was destined to influence the whole course of Romanesque and even Gothic building (see note, 33. 1, p. 231). Yet nothing that Sidonius says would lead us to infer that the church of Perpetuus was an epoch-making

[1] Sidonius says that the sunlight was reflected from the gilded roof, which, at a period when gold backgrounds were not yet employed in mosaic, certainly implies the ceiling of painted and gilded wood usual in early basilicas. It may be noted, however, that he speaks of mosaics covering the *camera*, a word which implies vaulting, but is probably here applied to the *concha* of the apse (cf. note, 54. 1, p. 226, below). Sir T. G. Jackson, *Byzantine and Romanesque Architecture* (Cambridge, 1913), ii. 31, also regards the church as ceiled. He draws attention once more, as Viollet-le-Duc in an earlier generation, to the poverty of our information on the churches built in Gaul before the tenth century. Neither Sidonius nor any other writer gives us a tithe of the facts which they might so easily have presented.

structure; we infer it only from the later description by Gregory of Tours.[1] In connexion with the churches mentioned by Sidonius, we must not forget the metrical inscriptions which he and his rival poets composed at the bishop's request to be engraved upon the walls. These are of such a length that they were probably cut in rather small characters upon panels or executed in mosaic. In the case of Patiens' church, the verses of Constantius and Secundinus were to be placed to right and left of the altar, those of Sidonius himself perhaps opposite on the west wall, though the words he uses are not clear (*in extimis*).[2] Monastic buildings are not described by our author. Yet, as we have already seen, he had a personal knowledge of Lerins, and any details of its architectural features, plan, and internal arrangements would have been of the highest interest. He could have described to us, too, the process by which the simple cell of the Syrian monk Abraham near Clermont developed into the monastery of St. Cirgues, for at the time of Abraham's death the community was evidently of some size (VII. xvii. 3, 4).[3] Altogether, we could wish that Sidonius shared the archi-

[1] *Hist. Franc.* II. xiv. In IV. xx Gregory mentions its destruction by fire. He himself restored it; and as he must have been familiar with its details, should be regarded as a competent witness.

[2] This was a position where inscriptions are known to have been placed (H. Holtzinger, *Die altchristliche Architektur*, &c., p. 184).

[3] The monastery must have been of the eremitic type, like those of St. Martin at Marmoutier and Tours, and based on oriental prototypes (cp. p. lxxix above). The church was completed by Abraham (*Petits Bollandistes*, vii. 59, 60).

tectural interest of one of his friends, who was fond of reading Vitruvius (VIII. vi. 10). Perhaps, however, he would only have reiterated his preference for the traditional in all things, and, like the accepted oracles of the eighteenth century, to whom Gothic architecture was all contemptible, have regarded all divergences from Vitruvian precept as wholly beneath his notice. His indifference to the really important features of Perpetuus' church lends some colour to the supposition. In relation to the art of music, our author again reveals no personal enthusiasm. His references to secular music usually concern the performances enlivening banquets, which then, as now, were intended rather to distract than to inspire. But we are told that Theodoric II only cared for serious strains at table, and that he dispensed alike with the hydraulic organs[1] and with vocalists—the negative statement here suggesting that in other houses neither was disdained (cf. above, p. lxiv). Perhaps at no period of his life was Sidonius a patron of musicians.[2] Church music receives just enough attention to tantalize the reader. Among the merits of the accomplished priest-philosopher Claudianus Mamertus, Sidonius records his zeal in training the choir for his brother the Bishop of Vienne;[3] again, in connexion

[1] For these, cf. note, 6. 1, p. 216.

[2] He liked the music of birds, to which he refers more than once. He also mentions without resentment the piping of the local 'Tityri', heard on the hills near Avitacum.

[3] IV. xi, lines 13–15 *Psalmorum hic modulator et phonascus* | *Ante altaria fratre gratulante* | *Instructas docuit sonare classes.* St. Amabilis of Auvergne was in early life cantor in the church of St. Mary at Clermont (Chaix, ii. 66).

with the celebration of the festival of St. Just at Lyons, we hear of antiphonal singing (V. xvii. 3). There is no definite allusion to the use of musical instruments in churches.

In the matter of costume, we learn more of barbarian than of Roman dress, and more of the garb of laymen than of clerics. It may be taken for granted that the tunic remained the usual garment for the house among the Gallo-Romans; sometimes the girdle or belt which held it round the waist offered scope for ornament of a particular fashion (IV. ix. 2).[1] Over the tunic were probably worn the mantles most commonly in use in late-Roman times—the *pallium*, of Greek origin,[2] and the *paenula* (a kind of poncho) for bad weather. The toga was now a ceremonial garment, of which the most sumptuous form was the *toga palmata*, or embroidered robe worn by the Consul.[3] Sandals or boots are only

[1] *Summus nitor in vestibus, cultus in cingulis, splendor in phaleris.* The lively sexagenarian Germanicus is said to have accentuated his youthful appearance by wearing 'tight clothes' (IV. xiii. 1). This may refer only to the tunic; but it is conceivable that the influence of Teutonic or Celtic fashions may have made itself felt, and that some garment for the leg may be indicated; or did he wear a buttoned garment? Cf. Fertig, i. 24.

[2] The *pallium* was first distinctive of philosophers, who continued to wear it after it came into general use, differentiating themselves from the unlearned by carrying a staff and wearing the hair and beard long. From IV. xi. 1 we infer that this costume was still affected by philosophers in Gaul in the middle of the fifth century.

[3] Cf. VIII. vi. 6; and *Carm.* xv. 145 ff., where Araneola embroidered a *toga palmata* for her father; for this garment, cf. Marquardt, *Privatleben*, p. 549. It has been noticed

mentioned in relation to a symbolic figure of a Muse; the description of the method of lacing is not easy of comprehension (VIII. xi., ll. 12 ff. of the poem). It is just possible that there is an allusion to a professional dress in the letter which Sidonius sends to Domitius, the grammarian of Ameria, inviting him to the cool retreat of Avitacum in a very hot summer. Domitius is depicted as expounding Terence to his pupils wrapped in a thick cloak, while others were perspiring in thin linen or silk; it may be, however, that Domitius was extremely sensitive to draughts, for even under the thick cloak he is said to be swathed round and round, a fashion which would be no necessary accompaniment of a master's gown.[1] Armour is mentioned in the letter which recounts the prowess of Ecdicius in breaking through the Gothic lines round Clermont. The hero is described as wearing greaves, a cuirass, and a helmet with cheek-pieces (III. iii. 5), the whole equipment following the Roman model. The most careful description of barbarian costume concerns not the Visigoths or Burgundians, with whom Sidonius was in frequent contact, but in all likelihood the Franks, with whom he had had probably no regular relations. It has been already noticed (p. xciii) that the weapons borne by the guards of the young Sigismer, whom Sidonius saw at Lyons, are characteristic of that nation (note, 35. 1, p. 233). The prince himself wears a flame-red mantle over a white silk tunic, and a wealth of

above that, even in earlier times, the cumbrous toga was discarded as soon as possible.

[1] II. ii. 2 *Endromidatus exterius, intrinsecus fasceatus.*

gold ornaments.[1] His companions wear high, close-fitting, short-sleeved, parti-coloured (?) tunics scarcely reaching to their bare knees, and low boots of hide with the hair adhering; their legs are left uncovered. Each has a green cloak (*sagum*) with a purple border, and apparently a skin mantle over all, brooched on the right shoulder to leave the sword-arm free. The sword is worn on a baldric; the other weapons are barbed lances and missile axes (*lancei uncati*, *secures missiles*). Circular shields enriched on the field with silver, and on the *umbo* with gold, complete the equipment of the brilliant train. In general it recalls the Frankish warrior as he is depicted in Carolingian illuminated manuscripts of the ninth and tenth centuries; though at this later date

[1] IV. xx. 1. The Teutonic princes and nobles became very fond of wearing silk in later times; but the mention of it here is interesting from the comparatively early date (perhaps A.D. 470) at which the letter was written. Cf. what has been said above of the silk textiles of oriental style used by contemporary Gallo-Romans. The excavation of Frankish graves has abundantly illustrated the fondness of the Franks for gold ornaments, a taste which was shared by all the Teutonic peoples, notably the Goths. The whole passage is so important for the student of early Teutonic archaeology that it is worth while to give the original words: *pedes primi perone saetoso talos adusque vinciebantur; genua crura suraeque sine tegmine; praeter hoc vestis alta stricta versicolor, vix approfinquans poplitibus exertis; manicae sola brachiorum principia celantes; viridantia saga limbis marginata puniceis: penduli ex humero gladii balteis supercurrentibus strinxerant clausa bullatis latera rhenonibus. . . .* For Visigothic and Burgundian weapons and personal ornaments, see Barrière Flavy, *Les arts industriels des peuples barbares de la Gaule*, vol. i; Feuvrier et Février, *Les cimetières bourgondes de Chaussin et de Wriande*, 1902.

the legs are commonly protected by tight bandages. The skin garment is the great characteristic of the barbarian in the Roman's eyes; the adjective *pellitus* is used almost as a synonym for barbarian.[1]

Especial importance was attached by the different tribes to the manner in which the hair was cut. Theodoric's hair is withdrawn from the forehead and long over the ears (I. ii. 2).[2] The Saxons have the whole fore-part of the skull shorn, a fashion which at a distance seems to increase the length of the face and reduce that of the head (VIII. ix, ll. 23–7 of the poem). The Sigambrian normally wears his hair long at the back; the old warrior of this tribe, whom Sidonius sees at Bordeaux, has had his long locks cut off, and will not feel a true man until they have grown again (ibid. l. 28).

Of clerical vestments, unfortunately, nothing is said; at this early period, differentiation between clerical and lay garb may not have gone very far; but it had begun, and even a few words would have had their importance. Monks are described as wearing the *palliolum*, which

[1] Cf. above, p. xxxiii, also I. ii. The Greeks had a similar notion that the use of furs was a barbaric habit.

[2] The Gothic princes do not seem to have allowed their hair to grow so long as to fall on their shoulders as the Merovingians did (Lindenschmit, *Handbuch der deutschen Altertumskunde*, i. 330). The Gallo-Roman Germanicus had his hair cut 'wheel-fashion', whatever that may mean (IV. xiii. 1 *crinis in rotae specimen accisus*): perhaps the effect was similar to that of the male coiffure on late Roman diptychs and on tombs of the fifteenth century, as exemplified by the monuments of English knights whose hair is cut across the forehead, as if a basin had been used by the barber.

would seem to indicate that the monastic dress at first resembled that of the philosopher (IV. ix. 3). The cowl was apparently at this time an independent covering for the head, as Sidonius sends a thick one as a present to the abbot Chariobaudus (*nocturnalem cucullum*, VII. xvi. 2).[1] The tonsure is described by the usual word *corona*, which is ultimately transferred to the tonsured: *corona tua* is used very much as we should say 'your reverence'.

The allusions to sport and games are fairly numerous. In the chase the bow is the principal weapon (I. ii), but for encountering the boar and other beasts the spear comes into play, the game being driven into nets (VIII. vi. 12). Namatius is bantered on the over-merciful temperament of the hounds with which he pursues the hares of Oleron (ibid.).[2] The hawk is more than once mentioned as an essential possession of the young country gentleman with sporting tastes (III. iii. 2). In one place we hear of a fishing expedition to which Agricola, his brother-in-law, invites Sidonius (II. xii. 1).[3] Racing in small boats took

[1] The hood is said by Cassian to have been adopted in imitation of children's dress, to suggest innocence and simplicity (*Inst. Coen.* I, ch. iii).

[2] The none too serious sportmanship of Namatius may perhaps be compared to that of the younger Pliny, who sat by the net armed, not with a boar-spear, but with his tablets, and recommended Tacitus to do the same, providing himself in addition with a luncheon-basket and a bottle of wine (*Ep.* I. vi).

[3] The peasants set night-lines in the lake at Avitacum, where fish were plentiful and of good quality (II. ii. 12); in other places Sidonius alludes to streams containing good fish. Beyond the fact that Euric had ships on the Atlantic to protect

place in former times on the lake below Avitacum, in recollection of Aeneas' regatta at Drepanum, the people of Auvergne claiming a Trojan descent (II. ii. 19). Large comfortable river-boats manned by rowers ply on the Garonne (VIII. xii. 5).[1]

References to games are of much interest, but unfortunately they are seldom precise, and where they seem to give detail, only confuse by uncoordinated facts. A board-game of some kind resembling backgammon, possibly that known as *duodecim scripta*,[2] is indicated in the difficult passage in I. ii, where Theodoric is described at play. Dice-boxes are frequently mentioned, and one would assume that games of hazard were a little too popular with the aristocracy of Gaul.[3] Outdoor games with balls were evidently pursued with ardour,

his shores from the attack of the swift *myoparones* of the Saxons (VIII. vi. 13), we learn nothing of naval matters: Sidonius enters into no particulars as to the style of the ships or the tactics pursued. His reference in the Poems to the Vandal raiders has been already noticed (p. xci above).

[1] On the Ticino and Po in Italy there was a service of 'packet' boats (*cursoriae*) (I. v. 3). Such services were kept up in Italy under Theodoric the Great. Cf. Cassiodorus, *Variae*, II. xxi, IV. xv, where the crews (*dromonarii*) are in question.

[2] In this there was a board (*tabula*) used both with dice and men, as appears to have been the case with Theodoric's game (see note, 5. 1, p. 216). A *tabula*, with 'men' of two colours, is again mentioned as one of the attractions on the river-boat in which the luxurious Trygetius is to travel (VIII. xii. 5).

[3] *Pyrgi* (V. xvi. 6); *fritilli* (II. ix. 4). But in the second of these passages *tesserae* are mentioned as well as the dice-boxes; and in the first there is also a *tabula*, so that perhaps in neither case have we to do with mere hazard. Cf. I; V. xvii.

and Sidonius, similar in this to Augustine, admits himself a devotee (V. xvii. 6). But here again it is difficult to form an idea of the rules. There is no mention of any apparatus beyond the ball itself, so that to translate by 'tennis' is misleading to a modern reader: the players seem simply to have required an open space in a courtyard or on the grass, with perhaps lines marked upon the ground. Sometimes two players were enough, as when Sidonius and Ecdicius play in the meadow by the lake (II. ii. 15)[1]; at others there are opposing pairs (II. ix. 4); in one place we read of whole 'sides', when at the festival at Lyons the elderly Filimatius is knocked down (V. xvii. 7). The reference to collisions shows that the game was fast.[2] The great games of the Circus were still held in Gaul in the second half of the fifth century, but possibly not after Majorian's time.[3]

Turning to the apparatus of more serious pursuits, we find various references to writing materials. Letters and manuscripts were written upon parchment or paper; the words *membrana*, *papyrus*, and *charta* are all employed, the two latter being synonymous.[4] But tablets (*codicilli*, *pugillares*) and a stylus were used for the first notes or

[1] There were regular grounds, *sphaeristeria*, at all considerable villas. Pliny had them at both his principal country-houses (*Ep.* II. xvii; V. vi).

[2] It may have been the *harpastum* (ἁρπαστόν). See note 73. 2, p. 239.

[3] Majorian held them at Arles (I. xi. 10). Cf. *Carm.* xxiii. 268.

[4] Papyrus was the common material for letters; it was not adapted for use on both sides, as parchment was (cf. Marquardt, *Privatleben*, pp. 807 ff.).

rough drafts (e. g. IV. xii. 4, and cf. Cicero, *Ad fam.* IX. xxvi). Literary people were sometimes accompanied by a secretary, who kept the tablets always ready for their use, or himself wrote from their dictation, as did the secretary of Filimatius on the famous occasion when Sidonius composed his epigram upon the towel (V. xvii. x).[1] From IX. xvi it would appear that ink was allowed to dry, and that the process was not accelerated by the use of sand, or by any other substitute for blotting-paper. In the same passage there is a reference to ink freezing on the pens in very cold weather.[2]

A few miscellaneous facts may be noted which bear upon contemporary custom and observance. From I. v. 10 we gather that the old Thalassio still held its own in 468, the year of the wedding of Ricimer and Alypia, and that the crown was still worn by the bridegroom at the ceremony. For all that is said to the contrary, it might have been a pagan marriage of

[1] Possibly shorthand was used on such occasions. Shorthand was certainly employed by copyists of manuscripts; and in the episode of Sidonius' chase after the mysterious book by Lupus, which Riochatus had concealed from him, shorthand writers were used to make excerpts on the spot (IX. ix. 8 *Tribuit et quoddam dictare celeranti scribarum sequacitas saltuosa compendium, qui comprehendebant signis quod litteris non tenebant*): *Exceptores* were of great service in the Church, and Ennodius in his life of Epiphanius relates that the Bishop of Pavia in his youth was an expert in tachygraphy. For the class of civil servants named *exceptores* see Hodgkin, *The Letters of Cassiodorus*, p. 110.

[2] Mme de Sévigné records the same thing as occurring at Grignan in Provence during her visit to her daughter, the Comtesse de Grignan.

Catullus' day, whereas both the contracting parties were Christians.

An interesting point is raised with regard to the disposal of the dead. The spade of the excavator seems to show that in the Roman provinces cremation went out of fashion about the year A.D. 250. We should infer the opposite from those passages in Sidonius, where the machinery of cremation is mentioned as if it were still in use, or had been so within living memory (III. iii. 13; III. xiii; *Carm.* xvi. 123). Perhaps we may hazard the conjecture that a few aristocratic families preserved an old custom after it had been abandoned by the mass of the people, just as, in more ancient times, they had maintained burial when incineration was first introduced. The evidence of Sidonius with regard to epitaphs also deserves notice. Those which he himself composed are of inordinate length, and imply monuments with abundance of plane surface.[1] That they are not merely literary exercises, but really meant to be used, is shown by his desire that the work of the monumental mason who was to cut the epitaph on the tomb of the prefect Apollinaris should be

[1] It would seem from III. xii. 5 that the tomb of Apollinaris was to be a flat slab, and therefore unlike the large structural tombs erected by the earlier Romans, and perhaps exemplified in Lyons by the *Conditorium* of Syagrius, mentioned in V. xvii. 4. This *Conditorium* was perhaps one of the monuments lining the high road, which ran close to the church; but the grave of Sidonius' ancestor would appear to have been in a crowded cemetery. It is a rather curious fact that Sidonius and his father should have allowed the remains of the elder Apollinaris to lie unmarked until the traces of the mound above it were almost obliterated.

carefully checked, for fear that any error committed might be imputed to the writer and not to the artisan. Altogether, the epitaphs are of most formidable length, eclipsing in this respect those of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, or the longer effusions of our country churchyards.

The imperial road system was still apparently maintained on a satisfactory footing in the year 467, when Sidonius travelled from Lyons to Rome, and, as bearer of an imperial summons, was entitled to the free use of post-horses. The *mansiones*, or rest-houses, and the *veredarii*, or mounted letter-carriers, are mentioned in different Letters (III. ii. 3; V. vii. 3).[1] In more than one place Sidonius alludes to inns which were patronized by nobles when no better accommodation was to be had, but they seem to have been of indifferent quality.[2]

The above are but examples of a much larger number of points which the archaeologist may discover in the Letters. But even these will suffice to show that the study of Sidonius is not altogether unprofitable to archaeological research.

The preceding pages have sketched in outline the

[1] From the phrase used in III. ii, *angustiae mansionum*, we may infer that the accommodation was not luxurious. In Italy, as we should expect from the continuance of the river service, the *Cursus publicus* was maintained under the Ostrogoths as the references in the *Variae* of Cassiodorus show (e.g. I. xxix; IV. xlvii).

[2] e.g. VIII. xi, lines 41 ff. of the poem:

Ne, si destituor domo negata,
Maerens ad madidas eam tabernas,
Et claudens geminas subinde nares
Propter fumificas gemam culinas, &c., &c.

life of Sidonius and the surroundings in which it was passed. But the conditions under which he grew to manhood will be imperfectly understood unless something is said of the system under which the young Gallo-Roman was prepared for his career. For the education which the boy Sidonius received, the typical education of his class and time, exerted a lasting influence upon the man. It coloured his whole outlook upon the world, not always to his advantage, since his very loyalty to academic ideals obscured those natural powers of observation which he certainly possessed. It controlled his literary prospects, determined his interests, and created the astonishing style which seemed to him worth so many vigils, but to us is like a faded finery, hampering the free movement of his thought. Some idea of the intellectual training which produced such strange results is thus essential to our purpose.

The education of the young Gallo-Roman in the fifth century differed but little from that which his father and grandfather had received.[1] The whole training was rooted in traditions no longer vital; it was essentially bookish, uninterested in facts, almost exclusively absorbed in words. Before all other things it set Grammar and Rhetoric; in many schools these two subjects represented almost the whole curriculum. Law had of course to be learned by candidates for the bar;

[1] On education in the fifth century, see Dill, pp. 338 ff. The principal academic centres in Gaul were now Bordeaux, Toulouse, Narbonne, Arles, Lyons, Clermont (Arverni), and Vienne. The first had been the most important, prior to the Visigothic occupation.

philosophy was studied perhaps more as an accomplishment and a discipline of the mind, than for the problems with which it was properly concerned;[1] there was some musical instruction, perhaps more of a theoretical than of a practical nature. But for most youths education meant a proficiency in the Latin classics, a knowledge of the structure of the Latin language, and of the art of speaking before an audience upon a given subject. The interest was directed not to the synthesis of life, but the antithesis of clauses. Science, as we understand the term, was practically unknown; the mathematics, the geography, the astronomy of the schools had as much relation to mythology as to fact. The interesting letter on the death of the rhetor Lampridius shows that even on the most brilliant products of the late Roman schools, astrologers[2] could still exert their baneful influence (VIII. xi. 9). Perhaps the decline in the study of Greek prejudicially affected the power and inclination to observe or think naturally. That language was still taught in Gaul; Sidonius noted the fluency of Lampridius in both Greek and

[1] As already observed, the most original work in philosophy was done by ecclesiastics like Claudianus Mamertus and Faustus. Sidonius had perhaps more than a smattering of philosophy. Several passages indicate his general information, and one of his letters (VII. xiv) contains long passages in the sententious style of Seneca. In certain Gallic circles there was an interest in Platonism (*Collegium Conplatonicorum*, IV. xi. 1), and there were real enthusiasts for abstract thought, but the spirit which governed much philosophizing of the day was evidently that of Martianus Capella.

[2] Cf. Cassiodorus, *Variae*, IV. xxii, xxiii, where Theodoric orders the trial of two Romans of rank, Basilius and Praetextatus, for practising magical arts.

Latin ;[1] and at Narbonne there were men of culture who appreciated Greek poetry.[2] But the Theodosian Code shows that the Latin grammarians received higher salaries than the Greek, enjoyed a higher position, and probably instructed larger classes.[3] Their lectures consisted for the most part in commentaries on classical authors, chiefly the Roman poets. Style was analysed; the vocabulary of each writer examined; metaphors and expressions were carefully discussed. Points of etymology and antiquarian knowledge were raised, and pursued along the by-paths of erudition; it was a golden age for commentators. Not all, however, was learned trifling. Some of the criticism upon Virgil and Homer was acute and penetrating, as, for example, the fifth book of the *Saturnalia* of Macrobius.

The great text-book in the schools of the fourth and fifth century was Virgil. To Sidonius, as to Augustine, he is the prince of poets.[4] Terence was evidently popular in Gaul; the Letters allude to his characters, and in the passage on the home-education of Apollinaris, Sidonius reads the *Hecyra* with his son, uncertain which delights him most, the fine style of the author, or the youthful grace and ardour of the boy. The influence of Horace is also evident in our author; he is second to Virgil among the poets.[5] The opulent and elaborated

[1] IX. xiii. If Sidonius translated Philostratus, and did not merely transcribe him, he must himself have been an adequate Greek scholar.

[2] *Carm.* xxiii. 100 ff.

[3] Cf. IX. xxi, and Dill, p. 347.

[4] V. xiii.

[5] Horace, like Cicero, was 'caned into' Sidonius and his schoolmates at Lyons (IV. i; V. iv).

style of Statius naturally commended him to such a society as that of fifth-century Gaul; he had been popular with Ausonius; and his influence on Sidonius as poet is undeniable.[1] It is the same with Claudian; the Panegyrics which charmed the ears of an Avitus or an Anthemius owe him much, but the splendour of the original is gone. Among prose-writers, not Cicero,[2] but the younger Pliny was the favourite. In the introductory Letter of the fifth book, Sidonius acknowledges him as his master; and in a later book again refers to this professed allegiance.[3] Pliny, the agreeable letter-writer, was the inevitable model of a society in which correspondence with friends was a main interest of existence: no less inevitable was the reproduction of his mannerisms rather than his excellences by purely imitative writers. In his introductory epistle to Constantius, Sidonius quotes as a warning the nickname given to Julius Titianus for his sedulous efforts to reproduce the style of Cicero: he was called 'the ape of orators' (*oratorum simia*). Yet he and his own contemporaries fell into the same error; they were apes of the second great Roman letter-writer, caricaturing their master by accentuating all his faults. Features of Sallust's style were distorted by them in the same manner.[4]

[1] R. Bitschofsky, *De C. Sollii Apollinaris Sidonii studiis Statianis.*

[2] Cicero seems to have been regarded as hopelessly beyond imitation. This appears to be the real sense of the remark in I. i, which irritated Petrarch (see note, I. 1, p. 215).

[3] I. i; IV. xxii. In IX. i. 1 Sidonius states that Firminus has called him a second Pliny.

[4] A list of the quotations from Latin authors in Sidonius, or obvious loans from them, is given by Mommsen, *Monu-*

Grammatical criticism of the classics was followed by specialized study of the great orators, with a view to proficiency in public speaking: this was the course of Rhetoric. The rhetor was a more important person in society than the grammarian. But, as noted above, he professed an art which, except in the Church, had little prospect of great or serious audiences; it was divorced from real life; it was the accomplishment of the speech-room.[1] The training was still, no doubt, a good one; rhythm, prosody, voice-production, division of the subject, were all thoroughly taught, and proved their value when there was a worthy occasion for their use. But most opportunities were hardly worth the taking; the speaker eulogized the great dead or the *Epigoni* of the present; he took part in academic displays or competitions before small circles, in which ancient or unreal issues were treated in the style of the class-room declamation.[2] An unbounded respect for certain models, a good memory with an endless stock of figures, metaphors and mythological examples always at command—these, and not the power to read hearts and

menta Germaniae Historica (*Auctores Antiquissimi*), viii. pp. 352 ff.

[1] Cf. above, p. lxxvi. The address of Sidonius at Bourges (VII. ix. 5) shows what skilful rhetoric could still accomplish.

[2] The oration of the young Burgundio on Julius Caesar is a case in point (IX. xiv). Sidonius promises to attend with a *claque* of applauding supporters (IX. xiv). This at least was a sensible subject: those of 'school declamations' were often far-fetched or absurd (cf. Dill, p. 370). On the *Declamatio*, cf. Nettleship, *Lectures and Essays*, 2nd series, 112, 113.

sway them to a genuine emotion, were the essentials of oratorical success. These were the qualities which carried Ausonius, the rhetor of Bordeaux, to the highest office in the State.[1] The enthusiasm for letters which such promotion implies is laudable in itself; but in the time of Roman decadence the reward fell to an artifice which sterilized instead of fertilizing the mind, and drove hearts capable of valiant action into channels of sentimental retrospect. The fine flower of all this education was the panegyric, and it was an artificial flower.

It has been already noted that the Church was beginning a new education of her own (p. lxxvi), and that in some cases boys were placed under a religious teacher, as Sidonius' own brother studied under Faustus at Lerins. But as a rule, sacred learning would seem to have been neglected in the schools attended by wealthy pupils.[2] Some of the great families were probably still pagan: others appear to have shown little zeal for the religion which they nominally professed; the old mythology dominated literary culture. Perhaps Sidonius was never really grounded in the study of the Scriptures till after his consecration. Only after that event do his letters show a familiarity with

[1] Ausonius taught Gratian rhetoric, and the emperor made splendid provision not only for him, but for all his relations. Gaul had a special reputation for rhetoric; the blending of the Latin and Celtic strains appears to have been favourable to the art.

[2] In the passage relating to education in the Panegyric on Anthemius (*Carm.* i. 156 ff.) there is no mention of the Bible or of Christian works.

Holy Writ; examples and illustrations derived both from the Old and New Testament then accompany or displace the mythological figures dear to his earlier years. By the side of Triptolemus. we hear of Joseph.[1] Moses, Aaron, and Solomon, Joshua, the Gibeonites. and the people of Nineveh are introduced in illustration.[2] The Church is the spiritual Sara;[3] Philosophy is the fair woman captured from the enemy and espoused by the captor;[4] the story of Peter and Simon Magus points its obvious moral.[5] St. Luke is quoted as a believer in the advantage of long descent.[6]

In no capacity did this scholastic education so harm Sidonius as in that which it was designed to advance—his quality as man of letters. He was too good a pupil of his peculiar masters to be anything but a bad writer. The curse of the rhetorical tradition clung to him like a chronic disease; it destroyed the originality of a genius never too spontaneous. In an age when it was improper for a literary man to be himself, he thought too faithfully of the proprieties. His age was just to him: he had the reward of his obedience. The society whose conventions he defended saw in him the mirror of contemporary writers;[7] in his heart, he him-

[1] VI. xii.

[2] VI. i. 6; VII. i. 3; VIII. xiv. 3; IX. viii. 2. A single letter has allusions to Lazarus, Pharaoh, Babylon, and Assur. All this is in complete contrast with the old indulgence in mythological allusion; it is the language of another world.

[3] VIII. xiii. 4. [4] IX. ix. 12.

[5] VII. ix.

[6] Ibid. St. Luke is also quoted in VI. i. 2.

[7] Claudianus Mamertus, Preface to the *De Statu Animae*; Gennadius, *De Script. Eccl.* c. 92.

self was sure that the vote of posterity was won.[1] Though, soon after his death, a Ruricius might whisper a doubt, it was long before the general verdict turned against him. The Middle Ages approved; and even after Petrarch's misgivings, the voice of admiration continued to be heard. But the Renaissance grew critical, the eighteenth century dared to attack.[2] If the value of Sidonius really lay in his style and diction, as he himself believed, then his credit would indeed be dead beyond resuscitation. Hardly any Latin author has received so short a shrift at the hands of modern criticism as this professed champion of the Roman tongue. When good Latinity was once more understood, our author's pedestal became a pillory; and the works of every writer upon style, from Horace to Boileau, provided missiles wherewith to pelt him. Gibbon, preferring his prose to his 'insipid verses', pays it a back-handed compliment after his manner. Even those who uphold particular merits are forced to draw upon the arsenal of epithets forged against the affected and the turgid writer. The most recent critics are the most severe of all. Hodgkin says that Sidonius has achieved nothing beyond a fifth-rate position as a post-classical author; Dill sees in him one of the most tasteless writers who ever lived. In the matter of depreciation the last word has been spoken; nothing fresh can now be said. The Latin style of Sidonius is condemned as finally as the French style of Voiture.[3]

[1] Yet he credits himself with facility rather than talent: *Scribendi magis est facilitas quam facultas* (III. vii).

[2] Casaubon said: *Sidonius . . . in re Latinitatis improbus intestabilisque* (cf. Germain, p. 114).

[3] Appreciations of Sidonius' style will be found in all

But the position of Sidonius no longer depends on his manner; his style is to-day brushed aside as a tiresome veil, obscuring what he has to say. He refused to write history;[1] he survives as the historian *malgré lui*. Though he missed one of the great opportunities in literature; though he failed to record much that was most worth recording in the world about him, and instead of the new drama of his times preferred to transmit for the hundredth time the vapid and worn-out stories of Greek mythology, he has yet preserved for us facts enough to constitute him a chief authority on the century in which he lived. His literary fate is indeed a paradox; he is one of those men whose *parergon* alone is valued, and who are esteemed for the very part of their work which they themselves deemed least important. By a careful sifting of the Letters and the Poems,[2] modern writers have extracted much material which, classified and co-ordinated, has thrown useful

writers who deal with his works. The substance of their criticisms is contained in the severe judgement of the Benedictines: *Sa diction est dure, ses phrases obscures; en un mot, sa prose est insupportable* (*Hist. litt. de la France*, ii, p. 570).

[1] He was asked by Prosper of Orleans to write on events in the war with Attila (VIII. xv), and by Leo on the later history of Gaul (IV. xxii); in each case he refused, either from disinclination, a sense of incapacity, or from worldly wisdom. In his reply to Leo he gives his reasons why a cleric should not turn historian. In this case Sidonius may have been doubly impressed by the need for caution, as Leo may have been the mouthpiece of Euric.

[2] The Poems, especially the Panegyrics, are as rich in historical fact and allusion as the Letters.

light on one of the darkest periods of history; on many points, Sidonius is the sole source of information. Nor is his mannerism always with him.[1] The Letters which yield most with least trouble are precisely those in which an eager personal interest in his subject, or the pressure of a busy life, or some unexpected necessity for haste have forced the writer to abandon his preoccupation with style and tell his business in a natural way. At such times he speaks directly: *iam nunc dicit iam nunc debentia dici*. The most efficient cause of plainer writing

[1] Cf. Baret, pp. 68 ff. Sidonius is the sole authority for the tradition that Horace was saved after Philippi by the intervention of Maecenas (Pref. to the Panegyric of Majorian), and that Crispus was poisoned by Constantine (V. viii). He alone relates the attacks of Euric on Auvergne, the war waged by Leo I against the Huns (Panegyric of Anthemius, l. 236), the victory of Aëtius and Majorian over Cloio (Panegyric of Majorian, l. 212), and the campaign of Euric against Auvergne (Letters, *passim*). All that we know of the life of Bishop Patiens is derived from him; so is our knowledge of the priests Constantius and Claudianus Mamertus; Prosper of Orleans is only mentioned in his pages, and he has preserved the names of numerous Gallo-Roman philosophers and poets otherwise unrecorded or hardly known. The names of Ragnahild and Sigismer are given only by him. He has done similar service in his literary allusions. We can infer from IV. xii. 1 that the *Epitrepontes* of Menander, of which we have now recovered a great part, was preserved intact in his time. Through him we learn of works now wholly lost, e.g. an account of Julius Caesar by Livy, a history of Caesar by Juventius Martialis, and the *Ephemerides* of Caesar's lieutenant, Balbus (all IX. xi). He also mentions works of Palaemon and Junius Gallio, brother of Seneca, which are no longer extant (V. x). An epigram attributed by him to Symmachus does not occur in the works of that author as we now possess them (VII. x. 1).

was probably the stress of episcopal work; to this our debt is large. We are infinitely relieved when amid the familiar affectations we come upon the *stilus rusticans* or the *sermo usualis* for which he apologizes as a degradation of his pen.[1] We almost lose sympathy with him in his personal troubles, as soon as it appears that it is misfortune which has simplified his diction.[2] Appreciating to the full the honourable solicitude of Sidonius for the purity of Latin, and his ever-present fear of Celtic or Teutonic encroachments,[3] we are willing to condone any intrusions from the vulgar tongue to be rid for a while of the alliterations, the inversions, the forced antitheses, and to see the meaning quickly in a simple dress. What we want of Sidonius is plain fact, and it is pleasant to admit that occasionally we get it without too much exasperation; sometimes the actor removes the mask and speaks in unaffected tones. Let it therefore be recorded to his credit that he does not always offend, and that not once or twice, but many times, he writes in a manner worthy of Roman literature at an earlier day. Let it also be remembered that his

[1] VII. ii. 1; IV. x. Cf. VIII. xvi *Nos opuscula sermone condidimus arido exili, certe maxima ex parte vulgato.*

[2] IX. iii.

[3] Cf. VIII. ii; and III. iii, where he uses the phrase: *Sermonis Celtici squama.* The Latin language stood in a more impregnable position than the pessimists supposed. Not only was it the most efficient instrument of expression in law, theology, and the sciences, but it was indispensable as the language of diplomacy between the various Teutonic courts. Probably most of the principal barbarians could speak it, at any rate among the Visigoths. Cf. Germain, p. 133.

subject-matter is often well presented; when his narrative interests him, he can tell a story brightly and with effect. Nor should we overlook the fact that Sidonius has a gift for portraiture, which frequently lends animation to his pages. Sometimes a character is sketched in a few sentences, as in the case of Paeonius the parvenu, the malicious old Athenius,[1] the lively veteran Filimatius who plays ball with the younger men (V. xvii), and Himerius the model priest (VII. xiii). At other times the description is at greater length, and details are drawn with a free hand. We have amusing pictures of the young fortune-hunter Amantius (VII. ii), and of Germanicus the juvenile sexagenarian (IV. xiii), who dresses in the fashion, who will hear nothing of age except the increased respect it brings, and grows more boyish every day (*non iuvenescit solum sed quodammodo repuerascit*). We have the interesting sketch of Vectius the country gentleman, whose girdles are of exquisite design, who hunts, hawks, and entertains his friends, but listens to the Psalms at meals, and is more priestly in spirit than many of those who wear priests' garments (IV. ix). We have the memoir of Claudianus Mamertus who does all the hard work for his brother St. Mamertus, to which allusion has been made above (p. lxxxi); we have the reminiscences of Lampridius, the quick-tempered rhetor, murdered by his slaves (VIII. xi). In other cases classes of men are portrayed with the same precision; for instance, informers, or popularity-hunting candidates for municipal appointments (XV. xix). A writer possessing such penetration and such graphic

[1] I. xi. 5 and 12.

powers as these deserves something more than an untempered ridicule.

Yet the counts in the indictment are sufficiently numerous. First and foremost there is the mania for antithesis, and plays on words which degenerate into the most lamentable of puns, for *paronomasia*, *antonomasia*, and all the other obliquities of language which sound like the infirmities which they are. A critical examination of Sidonius' work resembles literary pathology; his language is often diseased language, which could only regain a semblance of health by a free use of the knife. It calls aloud for amputation of the platitudes, pomposities, and verbal conceits which the euphuist himself would renounce as foolish. It is unnecessary to dwell long on a subject which has its pathetic side, yet concrete instances must be adduced in evidence.

First, we may take examples of the ruling passion for antithesis. The abuse of this is persistent, and sometimes verbal oppositions are cumulated with almost incredible pertinacity, as, for instance, in the description of Ravenna (I. viii). Sidonius pits against each other the words *novus* and *vetus* or *antiquus*, until the staleness of the trick infuriates. Thus *novus clericus, peccator antiquus* (IX. ii); *novo exemplo amicitiarum vetera iura* (VII. vi. 1), *in familiari vetusto novum ius potestatis* (V. xviii). But no glaring contrast of word or sense, however elementary, comes amiss; for instance: *pingues caedibus gladii, macri ieiuniis praeliatores* (VII. vii. 3); *confitetur repulsam qui profitetur offensam* (VII. ix); *pharetras sagittis vacuare, lacrimis oculos implere* (V. xii); *Cuius parva tuguria magnus hospes implesti* (III. ii); *Itinerum longitudinem, brevitatem dierum*, &c. (III. ii. 3).

And so on, and so on. The reader who desires more of this misplaced ingenuity will find instances on every other page. Plays upon words are no less common. *Inferre calumnias*, *deferre personas*, *afferre minas*, *auferre substantias* (V. vii); *scientia fortis*, *fortior conscientia* (IX. iv); *at non remaneamus terreni quibus terra non remanet* (IX. iii); *iuste iusta solventes* (III. iii. 8); *indidit prosecutionibus*, *edidit tribunalibus*, *prodidit partibus*, *additit titulis*, &c. (VIII. vi. 7); *seu sic sentiente concordia*, *seu sic concordante sententia* (IV. xxv. 5); *inconsulte consultat.* (VIII. ix. 13); *praedae praedia* (IV. xxv. 2); *suspicere iudicium*, *suscipere consilium* (IV. xxii. 1). The changes are continually rung upon such words as *dicere* and *ducere*, *suspicere despicere*, *orare perorare*, *ambiendus ambitiosus*, *providere praevidere*, &c. The list of such things is endless, but we are not yet at the worst; we have to endure puns from which a schoolboy would recoil. A proper name like Faustus, Perpetuus, or Rusticus is seldom allowed to escape: let two of them represent the series: *Perpetuo durent culmina Perpetui* (IV. xviii—this to be carved on the wall of a church); *rusticans multum quod nihil rusticus* (VIII. xi. 6, cf. *Rusticus*). It is pardonable for a man once in a way, in intimate conversation, to indulge a weakness of this kind, but how can a bishop be forgiven who puns for publication, and in work carefully revised not only by himself but by his friends? From a long list we may cite the following specimens: *non tam honorare censor quam censetor onerare* (VIII. viii); *honoris . . . oneris* (IX. ii); *ex more . . . ex amore* (IX. iv. 1); *classicum in classe cecinisse* (VIII. vi. 13); *Aptae fuistis*, *aptissime defuistis*

(IX. ix)—perhaps the worst of all. It is time to draw the veil over faults which it is impossible to condone; we may conclude with the following instances of *paronomasia* and *antonomasia*. *Leges Theodosianas calcans, Theudoricianasque proponens* (I. ii. 3); *flumen in verbis, fulmen in clausulis* (IX. vii); *inter perfectos Domini quam inter praefectos Valentiniani* (VII. xii. 4).

The reader may be spared illustration of the overloaded interminable sentences; or of the strings of illustrative instances and persons, sometimes eight or ten where two would have sufficed, till the tail is out of all proportion to the kite; or of the mannerism which declares for silence on things which might be praised, and then enumerates them to the bitter end; or of the labouring of points till they are, so to speak, hammered blunt; or the tautologies recalling the 'which here thou viewest, beholdest, surveyest or seest' of Armado: to insist on these things is to waste time; there is no possible defence. We may pass to other features, not reprehensible in themselves, but made so by immoderate or tasteless use. The metaphors of Sidonius for the most part are familiar, and worn in service. The world is a threshing-floor, spiritual exhortation a harrow. Life is like a river; a literary career is a sea-voyage; the mind of man is a sea, suddenly disturbed by the squall of adverse tidings. Silence is a curb; evil tongues are like barbed hooks. Verse written in sorrow is like the song of swans, or the music of very tense strings (VIII. ix. 4). A king's favour is a flame, which illuminates afar, but in neighbourhood consumes (III. iii. 9). A friendship not maintained is like a

sword that rusts if not frequently polished.[1] The schools of Lyons resemble a mint, in which youthful natures are struck on a philosophical die (IV. i. 3). Where originality is attempted, the result is often either crude [2] or over-intricate. As an example of the latter fault we may take the passage comparing the scion of a clerical family to a rosebush, for if he be not holy he stands amid all the roses armoured in the thorns of his sin (IV. xiii. 4); or that comparing Lupus, the generous discoverer of hidden talent, to the sun, whose searching rays will detect and draw up a moisture hidden deep under ground (IX. xi. 9); again, that which likens an author who is always writing but never publishes, to a dog who only snarls but never barks out (VII. iii. 2). Sometimes we find similitudes extraordinary to our taste, like the *mysticus adeps et spiritalis arvina*, which recalls the startling similitudes of a Crashaw or a Donne (VI. vi. 2). It is not surprising to find that Sidonius will mix metaphors with any man. *Salsi sermonis libra* (III. ii. 1); *lacrimis habenas anima parturiente laxavi* (IV. xi. 7); *manum linguae porrigis* (IV. i. 3); *quibus . . . faece petulantiae lingua polluitur infrenis* (III. xiii. 2), may suffice to show his quality. There are other defects or affectations, not immediately concerned with words, but equally due to the same imitative contentment with bad rhetorical tradition. There is the tiresome realism which insists upon elaboration of unessential details offensive to the finer sense—what Chaix has called *la manie de tout*

[1] The rusty sword or rusty armour is used more than once in different comparisons (cf. VI. vi. 1).

[2] *Fortunae nauseantis vomitu exsputus* (I. vii. 12).

peindre;[1] there is the parade of erudition which, if less obtrusive than the determined pedantry of Cassiodorus, is yet a weariness to the reader; there are the hyperbole in flattery, the perverse preference of the inappropriate, the joy in 'combinations of confused magnificence'. We cannot more justly stigmatize the work of Sidonius at his worst[2] than by continuing the criticism from which the last phrase was quoted, a criticism directed against certain English poets of the seventeenth century,[3] but equally applicable to our author of the fifth. For his style too is marred 'by descriptions copied from descriptions, by imitations borrowed from imitations, by traditional imagery and hereditary similes'. The thing could not be better said.

The result of all these artifices, applied with an unshrinking hand, is that Sidonius is often hard to construe.[4] Ruricius, his younger contemporary and

[1] ii, p. 97. Cf. the description of the parasite (III. xiii).

[2] It need hardly be said that Sidonius is at his worst when he believed himself at his best. His calculated effects are almost all tedious in form and redolent, not (to use a phrase of his own) of the Muses, but of the rhetor's lamp. Among such show-pieces are (in addition to the description of the parasite): the reply to the complaint of Claudianus Mamertus (IV. iii), the letter on Claudianus Mamertus' death (IV. xi), that on the informers at Chilperic's court (V. vii), that with the disquisition on necessary affinity between the cultured (VII. xiv). Even the letters on Theodoric (I. ii) and Petronius Maximus (II. xiii) are not free from these defects.

[3] Johnson, *Lives of the Poets*: *Life of Cowley*.

[4] For instance, the translator will be confronted by sentences like the following: *Nam cum viderem quae tibi pulchra sunt non te videre, ipsam eo tempore desiderii tui impatientiam desideravi* (IV. xx. 3).

partial imitator, was the first to complain of his obscurity, Petrarch confessed that he often found him unintelligible ; [1] and the most accomplished modern editors of his text admit that he presents some problems which they cannot be sure of having solved.[2] While diffuseness is his besetting sin, some of his phrases are condensed to the point of impenetrability, and his constructions are rendered obscure by the imperfect development of his thought. Petrarch wondered at the audacity of his style ; yet, as Baret has remarked, when it is examined, it is found that in prose he has fewer direct irregularities than Tacitus, and, in verse, than Virgil. It is rather a certain strange exotic character, instinctively felt, but not easily defined, which characterizes our author's work, compared not only with that of the golden age, but with that of a late writer like Symmachus. He is 'heteroclite' [3] ; his cadences have an unfamiliar ring ; when they are read aloud, they strike us as differing not in degree, but in kind from those of the classical authors. Were it not that an early critic has given blunt utterance to the suspicion,[4]

[1] *Sidonii temeritatem admirari vix sufficio, nisi forte temerarius ipse sim, qui temerarium illum dicam, dum sales eius, seu tarditatis meae, seu illius styli obice, seu fortassis (nam unumquodque possibile est) scripturae vitio, non satis intelligo* (Preface to *Epistulae ad fam.*).

[2] See Preface, p. iv.

[3] The word is Baret's, p. 106.

[4] Giraldus of Ferrara (quoted by Baret), who says that both in prose and verse Sidonius strikes him as having something of the Gaul and the barbarian: *in utroque dicendi genere, Gallianum nescio quid et barbarum redolere videtur.* (*De poet. hist. Dialog.* v ; in *Opera*, ii, p. 114.) Sidonius

we should hardly dare to hint that some subtle Celtic influence had really affected his manner, and that, unknown to himself, the older Gaul was secretly revenged upon this son of hers who had only ears for an Italian idiom. Is it merely a fancy that indigenous turns of thought have been unconsciously adopted by this champion of the classics? Do we witness the first movement towards the changes which were to issue in the Romance language in the South of France? Various indications seem to point that way. The synthetic structure of the older Latin tends to pass into analysis: the conjunctions *quia* or *quod* replace the complementary infinitive; the abstract replaces the concrete term. Prepositions grow more indispensable to inflected cases; the genitive is used in a manner which is almost French. The reader of the Latin text will discover a number of words or turns of expression used in a mediaeval or modern way. In one place, if not in two, the word *familia* is employed in the French, in place of the old Latin sense (VI. vii). *Vir litterarum* is *homme de lettres*;

would himself have borne any reproach rather than this. For the lifelong guardian of pure Latin in Gaul, the contemner of the *Celtica squama*, to be told that his own style smacked of barbarism, would have been a blow too grievous for endurance. His zealous interest in Latinity and his uneasiness at the indifference of certain fellow nobles to correct diction, deserved a better reward (II. x; III. iii. 2; IV. xvii; VIII. ii). Discussing the influence of Celtic dialect, Fertig asks what kind of Latin the middle classes spoke, if even nobles were so careless? (Part iii, p. 24). It is perhaps significant that Sidonius himself insists on his preference for current words, and on his avoidance of archaisms or far-fetched terminology (VIII. xvi).

nebula de pulvere is *nuage de poussière*. Baret records a number of these peculiarities, and gives a list of the archaisms and neologisms in the text.[1] We may note a few favourite or peculiar words: e.g. *tumultuarius*, used of rapid or impromptu composition; *lenocinari*, to coax or flatter; *fatigatio*, chaff or banter; *eventilare*, to go over, or search through; *humanitas*, hospitality; *piperatum*, 'piquant' or caustic. To some words Sidonius appears to give a new sense; thus it is hard to avoid the conclusion that more than once he employs *toreuma* where *toral* is alone appropriate. In his complimentary formulae he is as a rule correct and Roman; though he is fond of abstract terms like *celsitudo* or *Sanctitas tua* as honorific appellations.[2] His superscriptions give the name of his correspondent in the dative, with the addition of *suo*, if the person is a friend, or of the title *domino papae* if he is a bishop.[3] Sidonius does not employ the affectionate modes of address adopted by Ruricius, e.g. *domino pectoris sui Lupo*; *domino animae suae Pomerio*; *domino venerabili, admirabili, et sanctis omnibus aequiparando Sidonio*. As a rule, the letter ends with a *Vale*; but when the correspondent is a bishop, the formula is: *memor nostri esse dignare, domine Papa*. In one instance he closes with an *ora pro nobis* (VII. xii—to Ferreolus).

So much for the more obvious characteristics which

[1] p. 99; pp. 115 ff.

[2] But after Diocletian, such epithets as 'your sublimity', 'your magnificence', became the common mode of addressing great officials of State.

[3] The word *papa* is applied to bishops throughout.

mar the style of Sidonius; we have now briefly to estimate his merits as a letter-writer. It need hardly be said that he cannot be placed in the first rank; he is not, as his friends averred, a second Pliny, far less a second Cicero. But he touches so many sides of contemporary life; he lived through such momentous times; he is so exceptional in speaking with two voices, first as man of letters, nobleman and high official, then as a prominent Churchman, that in spite of his deterrent style, he has an interest somewhere for almost every reader.[1] In most things but the cultivation of brevity, he is superior to his predecessor Symmachus, whose letters seldom touch either great or entertaining issues, but are written to discharge the obligations of a punctual correspondent, and are often brief as memoranda, and of an unsurpassed aridity.[2] It will be more easy to understand the level on which Sidonius should be placed if we consider a few of the gifts which make the letter-writer, and then ask whether he possessed them. The master in this art must not be argumentative, or his letters become treatises; he must not always be serious, or they may insensibly change to sermons. He must know, as one of the greatest of the craft has said, how

[1] Sidonius tends to avoid the deeper subjects which occupy the thoughts of Jerome and Augustine. But in the ordinary field of life his range is very wide.

[2] Cf. Dill, Book ii, ch. 2. The successors of Sidonius as representatives of the art of letter-writing in Gaul, Ruricius of Limoges and Avitus of Vienne, both share his defects of over-elaboration and tumidity. Cassiodorus, the Italian, writing in the first half of the sixth century is no improvement; he has been described as 'concealing commonplaces within fold after fold of verbosity'.

to approach great matters by their small side—*prendre les grandes choses par les petits côtés*. If he confines himself chiefly to questions of public concern, he must be doubly careful to be individual, terse, and vivid; above all, he must have the light touch, and the latent gaiety, which never permit the tale to drag. He must be skilled in expression; things must be put, they will not put themselves. But the art must be so concealed that what he writes affects us like the prompt phrases of an unpremeditated conversation. He must be catholic in taste and subject. He must interest most men and not a few; the greatest letter-writers play upon an instrument of many strings. And, in the modern view, at any rate, his letters should be often intimate, revealing the writer's own mind, and telling something of his private life. We thus require of the perfect correspondent much that even the greatest of the ancient letter-writers cannot give. They are mostly Romans; and Roman manners entailed reticence on intimate things; hence a certain preoccupation with intellectual themes and public affairs, which tends to reduce the human interest of their letters. It is not that human interest is absent; there is evidence enough, especially in the case of Cicero, to prove the contrary. But it is often too much in the background, and a correspondence which is too objective is not letter-writing at its very best: it is one-sided; it lacks the perfect balance. For these reasons, even the first among the ancients will sometimes disappoint a modern reader familiar with the achievement of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but approaching the classics for the first time. In many ways Cicero is almost modern; his lively

sympathies bring him nearer to natural unreserve than any letter-writer of antiquity; he stands in a class by himself. But if we are conscious of a something wanting when reading Cicero, with all his ardour, his mobility, his colour and conciseness of phrase, it is inevitable that the same deficiency in the less admirable Sidonius should cause a more conspicuous void. The studied care for form which makes the agreeable Pliny sometimes tire, is exaggerated in his last disciple until all spontaneity is lost. And while the manner is frequently repellent, the matter often wearies in its turn; there is too much laudation of obscure literary efforts, too little talk of home affairs, of country life, of details of travel, of the natural beauties of southern France. Nature is overlooked, or regarded, as it were, with the eyes of a duke or cardinal of the Renaissance, seated at a comfortable point of vantage and with quotations from Virgil nearer to his lips than true feeling to his heart.[1] When Sidonius visited Rome in the time of Anthemius, his route followed the Flaminian Way from Rimini; and the latter part of it was the wonderful hundred and fifty miles beginning at Foligno, the stage which travellers from northern Europe used to cover before the days of railways. Goethe followed it when he first approached Rome; Shelley came down it in 1818, and felt the charm to the full. But of that charm the Gallo-Roman

[1] Though, as Sir A. Geikie has once more demonstrated (*The Love of Nature among the Romans*, 1913), several of the great writers had a true passion for natural beauty, yet, taking Latin literature as a whole, we find the spectacular aspect of nature rather too prominent; landscape and 'scenery' are the same thing.

poet is silent, betraying no interest in these things, and assuming none in his correspondent. He has nothing to say of Spoleto, or the falls of the Velino; we should never guess that he had seen Soracte from Civita Castellana, or looked from Castelnuovo across the valley of the Tiber towards the distant Alban hills. And on his river journey down the Ticino and the Po, though the song of the birds in the bulrushes gives him pleasure, his thoughts are soon diverted to Tityrus and the metamorphosis of Phaethon's sisters. For these and other reasons Sidonius cannot be placed very high among the masters who have expressed themselves through the medium of letters. It is in vain to seek in his pages the unstudied brilliance of Mme de Sévigné, the wit and vivacity of Voltaire, the light irony of Horace Walpole, or the natural gaiety of Cowper. We feel that Sidonius would never christen a path or copse 'La Solitaire' or 'La Sainte Horreur';[1] or stay alone in the woods all day for sheer love of verdure. His is not the art to throw off a likeness in half a dozen words, or to resume an affair of State in a pair of sentences; nor is it his to make a hearthside event like the escape of a pet hare an absorbing and complete adventure. In edification, he lacks the winning simplicity, the amiable grace of St. Francis of Sales. He cannot restrain his scholarship like Gray, or expand in confidences like Lamb. His humour often strikes us

[1] Though Pliny nicknamed his villas on Lake Como 'Tragedy' and 'Comedy', because one was on a high rock, the other on a low. Yet here again the Stage intrudes on Nature.

as forced;[1] he has compliments like those of the Hôtel de Rambouillet, but less adroitly turned. In fine, he was the victim of an artificial training; he lived in times not of renaissance but of dissolution; his was an age more eager for epistolary honours than any other, but more obviously debarred by circumstance from their attainment.[2]

Though we are not primarily concerned with Sidonius as poet, the inclusion in the Letters of some dozen epigrams and short pieces compels us to ask whether Gibbon's contemptuous phrase is deserved. Were these verses all that remained to us, there could be but one answer; 'insipid' is a temperate epithet for some among them. Of the two impromptu epigrams, one on the imputed satire (I. xi. 14), the other on Filimatius' towel (V. xvii. 10) we can only say that, like other couplets written against time, they should not

[1] Germain, in defence of Sidonius' humour, cites the letter to Graecus on Amantius (VI. viii), and the letter to Trygetius (VIII. xii). The former is probably the best which our author achieved in this field. In the second, as in that to Namatius, there is a certain straining after effect which tires the reader and defeats the humorist's end. We may add the remarks about doctors (II. xii) and incompetent sportsmen (VIII. vi). Cf. also IV. xviii; IX. vii.

[2] In many ways Sidonius recalls the Seigneur de Balzac (Jean-Louis de Guez, b. 1594, d. 1654), just as much as Voiture. The following passage from Balzac's letter to Corneille acknowledging a copy of 'Cinna' will illustrate the affinity: *Votre Cinna guérit les malades; il fait que les paralytiques battent des mains; il rend la parole à un muet . . . S'il était vrai qu'en quelqu'une de ses parties vous eussiez senti quelque faiblesse, ce serait un secret entre vos Muses et vous, car je vous assure que personne ne l'a reconnue.*

have been exposed to time's revenge. The epitaphs, elegies, and church inscriptions have the mechanical correctness to be expected of one whose mind was continually exercised by questions of metre. But they are mostly written out of good nature, or out of kindness of heart, motives which in all ages have often left the imagination uninspired. In truth, some of them come near to deserving the title of *naenia epitaphistarum* which their author almost feared for them himself. The poet's reputation cannot, however, be judged by these secondary efforts; it rests upon the *Carmina*, the twenty-four poems issued in 468,[1] and chiefly upon the three panegyrics in honour of Avitus, Majorian, and Anthemius. In these more ambitious works, which challenge, if unsuccessfully, a comparison with Claudian and Statius, we find the same faults so conspicuous in the writer's prose, with others added—the glittering antitheses, the far-fetched metaphors, the forced emphatic utterance, the unquestionable facility, the lack of emotional inspiration, the tiresome parade of knowledge, making whole parts read 'like versified chapters out of Livy'. But though over the greater part hangs the curse of an implacable memory that cannot forget the Schools, though Pegasus is ever reined to the manège, the whole achievement cannot fairly be dismissed as bad because the bad preponderates.[2] It may be that here, as in the stilted periods

[1] The poems were published at the request of Magnus Felix. The fact that the panegyric of Anthemius is placed first, out of its historical sequence, is in favour of the date mentioned above.

[2] Fertig, Part ii, p. 15.

of the Letters, the ear is arrested by unfamiliar rhythms and strange sonorities; here, too, a breath of barbarism has passed. But where the author feels his conscious power, there is dexterity, opulence and movement, there is a pageantry of changing form and colour to which the name of poetry cannot be denied. There are narrative passages which seize and hold the interest; for example, the description of the Vandals, or of the Roman army crossing the Alps. Parts of the Panegyric of Majorian advance with an ardour worthy their theme, while here and there flash out gnomic phrases after the glittering style of Lucan.[1] The declamatory manner of these hexameters, so far removed from the suave Virgilian grandeur, admits of frequent brilliance in description; the effect is that of historical painting on a large scale by a skilful but uninspired master. Some of the pieces on less ambitious subjects are not without occasional grace. The verses to Majorian, pleading for remission of the triple tax, strike a light vein with more success than the humour of the Letters would lead us to expect; but the Epithalamia would damage any reputation.[2] Sidonius is at his best in the rhetorical vein; he is the rhetor through and through. In his never-failing fluency, his adroit use of mythology and proverbial wisdom, he is the natural successor of Ausonius, and takes his place after him among the poets of the Roman decadence.

The literary reputation of Sidonius long survived his death. Ruricius of Limoges, in some respects

[1] Cf. the often quoted lines: *Has inter clades et funera mundi | Mors vixisse fuit.*

[2] *Carm.* XI. xv.

a pupil, refers to him in eulogistic terms, though conscious, as we have seen, of a certain obscurity in his style;[1] so does Avitus of Vienne, another late writer of letters.[2] Gregory of Tours praises his eloquence and power of improvisation.[3] Cassiodorus regards him as a master; Ennodius and Fortunatus are his frank admirers;[4] Jornandes had clearly read his poems.[5] Savaron has illustrated his popularity during the Middle Ages, when John of Salisbury, Abelard, and other scholars were familiar with his works, and mediaeval writers sought to imitate his manner.[6] But in the fourteenth century, the growing familiarity with Classic models reacted unfavourably upon his reputation. We have already noted that Petrarch was critical; and the Renaissance more critical still. Politian was unimpressed by his style; Vives called his prose ridiculous (*absurdissima*); Casaubon is severe, though Scaliger can still find words of praise.[7] The editions of Savaron and Sirmond revived an interest in his works; but with the eighteenth century he finally lost credit as a writer of Latin, while securing a permanent place as an authority for the history of his times. From Tillemont and Gibbon to Amédée Thierry, Guizot and more recent historians of his age,

[1] Baret, p. 102; Germain, pp. 112, 113.

[2] *Ep.* xxxviii. [3] *Hist. Franc.* II. xxii.

[4] Ennodius, in his *In Natali S. Epiphanii*, adapts four lines from the Panegyric on Anthemius, v. 69 ff.

[5] The portrait of Attila (*Get.* c. 24, 25) is indebted to the Panegyric of Avitus.

[6] In the excerpts from mediaeval writers (*Elogia Veterum*) at the beginning of his edition.

[7] See Baret, p. 105.

all have rendered homage to his involuntary merit, while one man of letters at least, Chateaubriand, has borrowed material from his pages (p. xciii above). Despite his chastisement as stylist, Sidonius has not fared ill at the hands of the posterity to which he entrusted his fame. Though his periods will never be recited either for pleasure or instruction, neither his name nor his work is forgotten; and in our greater libraries, while men pursue research, the Letters and the Panegyrics will always hold their undisputed place.

Of Sidonius as a man it is almost unnecessary to speak; the Letters prove his noble qualities, and those written after his entry into the Church reflect the saintliness which won him the honour of canonization. His chief fault, a defect of his ambitious early life, was an over-readiness to flatter where flattery, if given at all, should not have come from him. There were times when he too conveniently forgot the antecedents of the great, or their connexion with men whom honour forbade him to conciliate. Majorian was the comrade and the nominee of that Ricimer who had murdered Avitus; Sidonius forgets the fact too soon. Theodoric II had murdered his own brother; Sidonius, perhaps for a political end, appears oblivious of all save the royal virtues. Such flexibility is unworthy of the man who was to write the stern letter of rebuke to Graecus; nor was it a true part of the nature which trials and disillusions proved to be really his. This is the worst charge which can be brought against him; his other failings are little weaknesses which make him real to us, and which he never seeks to conceal. Thus

he sometimes appears too lenient towards unworthy action: for instance, towards the deception of the young adventurer Amantius; but he confesses with a charming frankness that he does not like censorious rigour (VII. iv 3). His literary vanity is now and then accentuated by false modesty (VII. iii, IX. xiii); but as a rule his simple confidence disarms resentment. When he assured his friend Fortunatus that the appearance of his name on the superscription of one of the Letters would ensure its immortality, he was probably more serious than not; after all, he spoke the truth, for the name of Fortunatus is preserved (VIII. v). He probably had no objection to being called a second Pliny (IX. i), and was quietly convinced that his critics were in the wrong.[1] But no doubt he discounted the eulogy which he received; much of it was complimentary verbiage, belonging to the etiquette of his day; and he himself was so profuse of it to others, that he can have been under no illusion as to its current value. The age allowed a great latitude in exaggeration; but it must be admitted that Sidonius availed himself of it upon occasion to an extent which is revolting to modern sentiment. His letter to Claudianus Mamertus reaches the limit of extravagance,[2] and with all allowance for the influence of an eulogistic time, we cannot read it

[1] Sidonius had critics, and apparently sharp ones. Cf. I. i; III. xiv; IV. xxii; VIII. i; IX. iv. But his attitude to criticism is sane: *namque aut minimum ex hisce metuendum est, aut per omnia omnino conticescendum.*

[2] Unless it is excelled by the poem to Consentius (*Carm.* xxiii), of which Dill says that he is ashamed to transcribe the absurdities (p. 362). Cf. also IV. iii. 22; VIII. i, x, xi, xiii; IX. iii, vii.

without continual irritation. When we are told that the subject of his praise can hold his own with the first names in every field, with Orpheus, Aesculapius, Archimedes, Vitruvius, Thales, Euclid, Chrysippus, and all the greatest Fathers of the Church as well, credulity is too obviously taxed, and we wish that Sidonius had remembered more often the gnomic saying which he ascribes to Symmachus: *ut vera laus ornat, ita falsa castigat.* Nevertheless it must be remembered that eulogies almost as absurd have been perpetrated in periods very near our own. Thus Prior, in his *Carmen Saeculare* so grossly flattered William III that, in Johnson's phrase, he exhausted all his powers of celebration.[1] We may dismiss the present subject by once more applying to Sidonius the words of the same critic, and say of him that in these matters he 'retained as much veracity as can be properly exacted from a writer professedly encomiastic'.[2] Again, Sidonius was quickly moved, and sometimes allowed his temper to impair his dignity. He 'blazes out'[3] when views are expressed which controvert a pet opinion; and when more seriously offended, does not confine himself to words. The apparently innocent disturbers of his grandfather's grave feel the weight of his fists or the lash of his whip (III. xii); he explodes at the care-

[1] We may remember, too, that even Mme de Sévigné once compared her daughter's style to that of Tacitus.

[2] That such indiscriminate eulogy was really a convention, and not natural to Sidonius, is shown by his readiness at all times to speak a frank word in season (IV. iv, xiv; V. xix; VII. vii). His practice did not contradict his theory that outspokenness is generally best (VII. xviii).

[3] *Incandui* (VII. xiv. 1).

lessness of a slave who lost some letters, and will not speak to him for days (IV. xii. 2).

But these are the small defects of great qualities. The most affected of writers is the most natural of men. Though uncommunicative about his home, he says enough to show that he was a good father of his family, affectionate to his wife, solicitous for the health and welfare of his children. There is real charm in the passage, already noted, in which he describes himself as sitting reading with his son, distracted between delight in the boy's ardour, and in the fine passages of the poets (IV. xii); there is real regret when in later years the enthusiasm of the young Apollinaris waned (V. xii).

He was a loyal friend. Mention has been made of his fidelity to Arvandus in the dangerous hour of disgrace (V. vii). Similar qualities are apparent in the letter on the death of Lampridius, another friend to whose faults he was by no means blind. At a time when his own anxieties were great, he exerts himself to the utmost at the Burgundian court to foil the informers who had brought Apollinaris into danger (V. vii). A large number of the Letters illustrate his anxiety for the health and prosperity of those for whom he felt regard, or his sympathy with them in their misfortunes.[1] When he became bishop, this fellow feeling was extended to a wider circle, and Claudianus Mamertus bears the highest possible testimony to the unselfishness of his life, when he complains that Sidonius is so busy attending to those who have no real claim upon him, that he finds too little time to answer

[1] Cf. V. iii, vi, ix, xii.

the letters of old associates. He, too, like this venerated friend, 'remembered through good and evil the necessities of the human lot.'[1] He was generous alike in the distribution of gifts and in the sentiment which is always ready to recognize the qualities of others. Gregory of Tours relates, in a passage often quoted, how he gave away his silver plate to relieve distress, and how, when Papianilla insisted on the recovery of the silver, the poor were compensated in other ways.[2] An example of his kindly thought for others is seen in VII. xvi, where he sends the winter cowl to Chariobaudus. He is ever ready to encourage the literary efforts of younger men (II. x, IX. xi), and even to lend them most precious volumes in his library, a supreme test of human kindness. He was capable of tolerance[3] towards those whose religious views he most detested; the Letters concerning the two Jews Gozolas and Promotus exhibit him in a pleasing light, and his dictum that a man may be a Jew and yet be sound in judgement does credit to his breadth of vision. He was sociable and friendly,[4] possessed of tact and patience, accommodating affairs to men in a manner which would have won the approval of his favourite Horace. Nor was he devoid of humour; though the examples of his wit which have come down to us are sometimes tiresome, he was probably

[1] *Condicionis humanae per omnia memor* (IV. xi. 4).

[2] *Hist. Franc.* II. xxii.

[3] In his judgements of Origen and Apollonius of Tyana (II. ix. 5; VIII. iii. 4) we mark a distinct freedom of judgement.

[4] In his earlier life he could enjoy good cheer, and evidently appreciated the refinements of luxury.

good company when in the mood. Throughout the Letters he appears as the kindly intermediary who endeavours to help others in the practical difficulties of life. As bishop, his benevolence is always active. We see him receiving a truant son and bringing about a reconciliation with the injured father (IV. xxiv); securing the remission of interest on an old debt for the advantage of an orphaned family (IV. xxiv); persuading a delinquent husband to return to his wife (VI. ix). But he never countenanced favouritism. He saw clearly that reward should only follow efficient service, and expressly opposed the plea that promotion should go by seniority (VII. ix; VIII. vii). He was a man of insight and common sense, upon whom people relied for good advice. Many reflections and maxims in the Letters attest his practical wisdom. He insists that the safeguard of enduring friendship lies in community of likes and dislikes (III. i); he sees that self-depreciation may be pushed to the verge of folly (IX. iii. 7); he knows that the most bitter family quarrels are those which arise over the division of estates (IV. i), and that at a Burgundian court, as at most others, proximity to kings is dangerous (III. ix).[1]

He was a patriot both as Roman and Arvernian. In the earlier part of his career we find him always urging the strenuous life for the credit of the Roman name. We have seen that more than once he rebukes the men of family who allow all interest to centre in their estates or pleasures, while the *imagines* of trabeated

[1] Cf. his remarks on friendship (V. iii; IX. xiv), on happiness (VI. xii), and prudence (IV. vi).

ancestors look down on their degeneracy (I. vi); even philosophy is not accepted as an excuse for inactive contemplation (VI. vi). He did not despair of the empire even in the days of Julius Nepos; he thought that if only patriotism were fairly rewarded, as good men would appear to show it as in the great days of the past (III. viii). When Auvergne was attacked by Euric, his spirit was worthy of Roman tradition at its best. Both during the siege of Clermont and after it, he evinced a courage and a fortitude which proved him worthy of his ancestors. It is unnecessary to dwell upon this crisis of his life; his nature issued from it confirmed in strength and refined as by fire. He possessed to the full the moral strength which enables men to overcome old prejudice in the service of a changed ideal. The exclusive magnate who chose his acquaintances with such care became the friend of all men; the proud noble could beg for the Church (III. i; VIII. iv). He was consistent in his loyalty to his new profession, and resolutely maintained the dignity of the priesthood even against the high worldly rank which he never ceased to respect (IV. xiv; VIII. vii). He was sincerely humble in his sense of his own unworthiness to be the shepherd of others at a time when he felt the need of guidance for himself: in his Letters to Lupus and other bishops after his election to the see of Clermont, the language is emphatic but the contrition is sincere (V. iii; VI. i; VII. vi). The devotion which in earlier years had perhaps depended much on formality of observance was now the guiding principle of his life; the reputation for piety which he gained among

his contemporaries and immediate successors is sufficient proof of his sincerity. History records no career precisely comparable to this. Conspicuous alike for his rank and literary celebrity, Sidonius was in many ways the first personage in his native land, yet he fulfilled his arduous and unfamiliar duties in a spirit of abnegation equal to that of colleagues trained to the renunciations of monastic life. In the evil days which fell upon his country, he never abandoned his people; when his own fortunes were darkest, he rejoiced that others escaped affliction (IV. ii). If Sidonius failed of greatness as a writer, he surely attained it as a man.

There are extant more than sixty manuscripts containing the whole or the greater part of the works of Sidonius, and some twenty containing a small part of them.[1] Out of this large number, Lütjohann, when editing the text for the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, selected six as of superior importance, some of these having affinities to a few other manuscripts, which for this reason were occasionally employed. The six manuscripts are:

1. *Codex Laudianus.* (Bodleian Library, MS. Lat. 104) 9th or 10th century. Known as L. Related to this book are *Parisinus* 1854 of the 10th century, known as N, and *Vaticanus* 1783, 10th century, known as V.
2. *Marcianus.* (Marcian Library, Venice, 554.) 10th century. Known as M.

[1] See the Summary by Dr. P. Mohr, *Praefatio* to the Teubner edition, pp. iii–vi; and Lütjohann and Löwe in *Mon. Germ. Hist.* VIII (*Auct. Antiq.*), pp. vi–xiv.

3. *Laurentianus.* (Laurentian Library, Florence, Plat. XLV. 23.) 11th–12th century. Known as T.
4. *Matritensis.* (Madrid.) 10th–11th century. Known as C. (Related to this is *Vaticanus* 3421, 10th century.)
5. *Parisinus.* (Bibl. Nat., Paris, 9551.) 12th–13th century. Known as F.
6. *Parisinus.* Bibl. Nat., Paris, 2781.) 10th–11th century. Known as P.

Of these, the first is the most valuable, with the two related manuscripts in Paris and at the Vatican, and with M and T for use where it fails; the other three are of subsidiary importance. It may be noted that certain *lacunae* are common to all; this would seem to indicate that they had a single archetype, which in these places presented difficulties to the copyist or had perhaps been damaged by fire.

Printed editions of Sidonius begin with the last quarter of the fifteenth century, at which period one was issued from Utrecht and another from Milan, the latter being reprinted at Basel in 1542 and 1595. E. Vinet's edition appeared at Lyons in 1552, and Wouweren's in Paris in 1598. The same year saw Savaron's first edition; his second (the first of critical value) followed in 1609. J. Sirmond's valuable edition, with notes from which every one has something to learn, was issued in 1614; Elmenhorst's five years later. Complete translations have hitherto appeared only in French; the first, by R. Breyer, Canon of Troyes, was printed in 1706; that of

E. Billardon de Sauvigny in 1787 and 1792; Grégoire and Collombet's version dates from 1836. The last-mentioned work has often been criticized for inaccuracy, but it is not for one who knows by experience the difficulties of their task to join in censure upon this point. Single Letters, or parts of Letters, are summarized or translated by many writers on Sidonius or his age.

The arrangement of the Letters in nine books is, as far as is known, that of Sidonius himself. Seven books were issued at different times at the request of Constantius, the first appearing in 478.[1] The Poems had already seen the light, perhaps as early as 468 (see above, p. cxli). The eighth book was added at the request of Petronius the jurisconsult of Arles (VIII. i),[2] and the ninth at that of Firminius (IX. i), perhaps about the year 484.[3] It soon becomes apparent to any reader familiar with the history of the times, that the order of the Letters is not chronological; most books contain Letters from the earlier and later parts of Sidonius' life; and within the limits of the several books the arrangement often seems capricious, Letters logically and historically connected being separated by others unrelated to them in subject. This confusion is partly due to the fact that, to complete his tale of nine books,[4] Sidonius had to ransack all his drawers

[1] Chaix, ii, p. 272.

[2] Petronius had the privilege of revising this book, but, like those which had preceded, it appeared under the auspices of Constantius.

[3] Chaix, ii, p. 306.

[4] The number was imposed upon him as a professed admirer and imitator of Pliny. Cf. note, 176. 1, p. 250.

and cases at Clermont for drafts of letters written long years before: this explains the inclusion in the two last books of Letters referring to his early manhood. But it is also true that in preparing for publication he was not primarily concerned with chronological sequence; he brought his letters together for other reasons, by associations of idea which to us are often obscure. One of them probably was to ensure to each book a wide variety of subject, that his readers might not accuse him of monotony.[1] Again, he regarded it as an advantage of the collection of Letters as such that it is essentially discontinuous, and provides reading for odd moments: from this point of view, lack of logical order is not of prime importance. It has before now been suggested that the author's arrangement should be disregarded, and that an edition should be issued with every letter in its proper order. If it were possible to give a precise and certain date to the majority of the letters, the overriding of the order approved by Sidonius might be justified on utilitarian grounds. But although certain Letters date themselves by recounting known events, while the period of others can be inferred from personal or other allusions, there remains a large proportion to which nothing more than conjectural or approximate dates can be given. This being so, it is hardly justifiable to upset the sequence which received the author's sanction, and has been retained for fifteen hundred years. Moreover, the convenience gained in one direction would be lost in another; for the references to Sidonius in historical

[1] Pliny seems to have acted on the same principle: his letters in like manner are not chronological.

and critical literature all follow the old system; and, were it changed, the reader, driven to consult a table of concordance at every turn, would soon wish the old order back. It has therefore seemed best to keep the nine books as they stand in the texts, placing at the head of each letter its certain or conjectural date wherever such can be reasonably assigned.

In many cases the year is exactly or approximately indicated by the contents. In others, a particular allusion, or the general tone, may enable us to infer the period: for instance, it is often possible to say with some confidence that a given letter must have been written before or after the entrance of Sidonius into the Church, or the abandonment of Auvergne by the empire. Again, there is a long interval of leisure in the author's career between A. D. 461 and 467, within which many letters descriptive of provincial life seem naturally to fall: a few of these might be transferred to the years between A. D. 456 and 459, though I have not actually suggested this. It will thus be seen that the date of the majority of letters can only be regarded as approximate.

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[Completed by F. Löwe and Th. Mommsen, who contribute the preface. The *Praefatio* of Mommsen, dealing with the life, &c., of Sidonius, is important.]

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LIST OF CORRESPONDENTS

AND PERSONS MENTIONED IN THE LETTERS IMPORTANT FOR THE CONTEMPORARY HISTORY OF GAUL.

(*Asterisks indicate correspondents and the letters addressed to them.*)

Abraham. VII. xvii. Saint. Ascetic from Mesopotamia, who, flying from Persian persecution, settled in Gaul, at Clermont, where he founded the Community of St. Cirgues. Died in 477 (June 15th). For a miracle attributed to him on the occasion of a visit made by Sidonius and Victorius, cf. Gregory of Tours, *Vitae Patrum*, c. iii; also *Hist. Franc.* II. xxi. The relics of St. Abraham were removed to the church of St. Eutropius in 1804 (Chaix, ii, p. 224).

Aëtius. VII. xii. 3. The famous general, who defeated Attila, and was murdered by Valentinian III. Also mentioned in *Carm.* v, vii, and ix.

***Agricola**. *I. ii. *II. xii. Brother-in-law of Sidonius; son of the Emperor Avitus; brother of Ecdicius and Papianilla. Unknown except for mention in Sidonius.

Agrippinus. VI. ii. An unscrupulous priest.

***Agroecius**. *VII. v. Cf. VII. ix. 6. Bishop of Sens. *Hist. litt. de la France*, ii, p. 564.

Albiso. IX. ii. 1. A priest; or possibly a bishop whose see is unknown. Cf. Chaix, ii, p. 75.

Alethius. II. vii. Party in a dispute with Paulus, which Sidonius refers for settlement to Explicius.

Amantius. VII. vii, x; IX. iv. Cf. also VI. viii; VII. ii. A young reader who served as letter-carrier between Sidonius and Graecus. A native of Clermont, he sought to better his fortunes at Marseilles, with the success related in VII. ii. Cf. Chaix, ii, p. 108 f.

***Ambrosius**. *IX. vi. A bishop. Conjectured by Sirmond to be the same as a correspondent of Ruricius. Cf. Chaix, ii, p. 98.

Annianus. VIII. xv. Saint. Bishop of Orleans at the time of Attila's invasion. Cf. Gregory of Tours, *Hist. Franc.* II. vii.

Anthemius. I. iv, v, vii, ix; II. i; V. xvi. A Byzantine noble, son of Procopius. Had served on the Danube and elsewhere, and married Euphemia, daughter of the Emperor Marcian. Nominated Emperor of the East by Leo, in 467, after the death of Severus. On the occasion of his second consulship in 468 Sidonius addressed a panegyric to him (*Carm.* ii), which helped to secure for him the Prefecture of Rome. Anthemius was not a strong ruler, though Arvandus was brought to justice in his reign. He gave his daughter Alypia in marriage to Ricimer (I. v. 10), but ultimately quarrelled with his son-in-law, and died in the same year (472). Sidonius is the principal authority for many events in his life. Cf. *Carm.* i; ii, 197, 199, 205 ff. See **Ricimer**.

Antiolus, or **Antiolius**. VIII. xiv. A bishop whose see is unknown. Had lived with Lupus at Lerins, and practised monastic austerities. Also a friend of St. Remi.

***Aper**. *IV. xxi; V. xiv. Friend. An Aeduan, possessing influence in Auvergne. See **Fronto, Auspicia**.

Apollinaris. III. xii; V. ix. Grandfather of Sidonius; Prefect of Gaul in 408 under the 'tyrant' Constantine. Disgusted with the instability of the usurper, he withdrew to his native city of Lyons, where he died. (Fauriel, *Hist. de la Gaule méridionale*, i, pp. 67, 99.)

***Apollinaris**. *III. xiii; V. xi. 3; VIII. vi. 12; IX. i. 5. Son of Sidonius. Cf. Introduction, p. xiv.

***Apollinaris**. *IV. vi; *V. iii, vi; II. ix. Cousin (?) of Sidonius, brother of Thaumastus, and apparently also of Simplicius, to whom, jointly with himself, *IV. iv, xii, are addressed. (Cf. also VII. iv. 4.) Endangered by informers at the court of Chilperic, whose machinations were thwarted by Sidonius.

Apollinaris. II. ix. 1. Connexion. Host of Sidonius

at the estate of Vorocingus (or Voroangus) in the valley of the Gard not far from Nîmes. Cf. *Carm.* xxiv. 53.

***Aprunculus.** *IX. x. Bishop of Langres. Suspected of intriguing with the Franks by the Burgundian king Gundobad, he took refuge at Clermont with Sidonius, whom he there succeeded. Cf. Gregory of Tours, *Hist. Franc.* II. xxiii; Duchesne, *Fastes épiscopaux*, ii, p. 185.

***Aquilinus.** *V. ix. Schoolfellow and friend. Grandson of Rusticus, the friend of Sidonius' grandfather Apollinaris. His father was Vicarius of a province in Gaul under the father of Sidonius.

***Arbogast.** *IV. xvii. Friend. Count, and Governor of Trèves. Descendant of an earlier Arbogast, created count by the younger Valentinian, and famous in the reign of Theodosius. Praised as a good Christian by St. Auspicius, Bishop of Toul. Possibly the same man who became Bishop of Chartres in 473 or 474. (*Hist. litt. de la France*, ii, pp. 478, 548; Tillemont, *Mém.* xvi, pp. 250, 475, &c.; *Gallia Christiana*, ii. 481.)

Arvandus. I. vii. Prefect of Gaul. The impeachment of this governor in the reign of Anthemius was one of the last acts of authority exercised by the Senate over Gaul. Cf. Introduction, p. xxx.

Asellus, Flavius. I. vii. 4. *Comes Sacrarum largitionum* in 469. Guard of Arvandus during his trial.

Astyrius (Asterius, Asturius), Turcius Rufius. VIII. vi. 5. Consul 449. Had commanded imperial troops with success in Spain. (Idatius. *Ann.* 450.)

Athenius. I. xi. Guest at the banquet of Majorian.

***Attalus.** *V. xviii. Sirmond conjectures that he is the Count of Autun who was uncle of Gregory of Tours. In his youth he had been sent as hostage to Childebert near Trèves, from whom he escaped in an adventurous manner. (Gregory of Tours, *Hist. Franc.* iii. 15.)

Attila. VII. xii; VIII. xv. King of the Huns. Cf. *Carm.* vii. 327.

***Audax,** Castalius Innocentius. *VIII. vii. Friend. Prefect of Rome under Julius Nepos (474).

Auspicia. IV. xxi. Grandmother of Aper (*q. v.*).

***Auspicius.** *VII. xi; IV. xvii. 3. Bishop of Toul. He enjoyed a high reputation for learning and piety. See *Hist. litt. de la France*, ii, p. 478; Chaix, ii, p. 86.

Auxanius. VII. xvii. Succeeded St. Abraham as abbot of the monastery of St. Cirgues, near Clermont.

Auxanius. I. vii. 6. A Roman who advised Arvandus on the occasion of his impeachment.

Avienus, Gennadius. I. ix. Of the family of the Corvini. An influential senator at Rome during the period of Sidonius' visit in the reign of Anthemius. He had been chosen by the Senate in 452 to accompany Pope Leo when he went out to meet Attila. (Prosper of Aquitaine, *Chron.* An. 452.) Colleague of Valentinian in his seventh consulate in 450.

***Avitus.** *III. i. Kinsman (cousin?) of Sidonius, and of about his age. He possessed influence with the Visigoths, which he appears to have used with some effect at Sidonius' request in or about the year 474. Cf. *Carm.* xxiv. 75, where his estate of Cottion (Cottium) is mentioned, and Chaix, ii, p. 147.

Basilius, Caecina. I. ix. 2. Consul, 463. An influential senator at Rome, of the Decian family, who secured for Sidonius the audience at which he recited his Panegyric to Anthemius, preparatory to his nomination as Prefect of the city. Basilius was at a later time treated with consideration by Odovakar, who summoned him to his Court. Cf. Chaix, ii, p. 333.

***Basilius.** *VII. vi. Bishop of Aix. One of the four bishops who were nominated to treat with Euric (see **Graecus, Faustus, Leontius**). Cf. Gregory of Tours, *Hist. Franc.* II. xxv.

Bigerrus. I. xi. 3. Of Arles. Associated with Paeonius in the episode of the anonymous satire.

***Burgundio.** *IX. xiv. A young man of senatorial family in Clermont, devoted to rhetoric and poetry.

Caelestius. IX. x. 1. Friend. '*Frater noster.*' Probably a cleric.

***Calminius.** *V. xii. Friend. Son of the senator Eucherius. Compelled by Euric to fight against Auvergne, his native country. Cf. Chaix, ii, pp. 292–3.

Camillus. I. xi. Of Narbonne. Nephew of Magnus (*q. v.*). Cf. *Carm.* ix, l. 8.

***Campanianus**. *I. x. Friend.

***Candidianus.** *I. viii. Friend. Native of Cesena, settled in Ravenna.

Catullinus. I. xi. 3, 4. Friend and comrade of Sidonius at the time of the *Coniuratio Marcell[in]iana*. Cf. *Carm.* xii.

***Censorius**. *VI. x. Bishop of Auxerre. (Duchesne, *Fastes épiscopaux*, ii, p. 441.)

***Chariobaudus**. *VII. xvi. An abbot.

Chilperic. V. vi. 2, vii. 1. One of the four kings ('tetrarchs') of the Burgundians. Father of Clotilda, queen of Clovis. Bore the title of *Magister militum*.

Claudianus, see **Mamertus, Claudianus.**

Consentius. IX. xv. 1 (v. 22 of the poem). Distinguished citizen of Narbonne. Owner of the villa *Octaviana* between Narbonne and Béziers. A man of great intellectual gifts. Cf. *Carm.* xxiii. 33, 98, 169, 177.

***Consentius.** *VIII. iv; IX. xv. 1 (v. 22 of the poem). Friend. Son of the preceding. Possessed a great reputation as poet in Greek and Latin (IX. xv). Succeeded to the Villa Octaviana. In earlier life entered the Imperial service, and was entrusted by Valentinian III with missions to Constantinople. Prefect of the Palace under Avitus. (*Carm.* xxiii, 2, 98, 176.) *Hist. litt. de la France*, ii. p. 653.

Constans. IV. xii. A *lector*, or *anagnôstes*.

Constantinus (III). V. ix. 1. 'The tyrant' (407–411). A soldier, proclaimed emperor in Britain. Established his power in Gaul, and was recognized by Honorius. But Gerontius (*q. v.*), his general in Spain, revolted; and having slain his son Constans at Vienne, besieged the tyrant in Arles. The emperor, profiting by this disunion, sent against him his general Constantius, to whom, after a siege of four months, he surrendered. He was murdered near Mantua by order of Honorius, while being taken to Ravenna under a safe-conduct (411). Cf. Freeman, *English Historical Review*, i, 1886, pp. 53 ff.

***Constantius.** *I. i; *III. ii; *VII. xviii; *VIII. xvi; II. x. 3;

IX. xvi. 1. Priest. Of a noble family in Lyons; reputed for eloquence, judgement, and love of letters. The publication of Sidonius' Letters was suggested by him, and the first Letter dedicates the book to him. The eighth book, collected at the request of Petronius, was to be issued under his auspices. Constantius wrote little himself, his principal work being a Life of St. Germain of Auxerre, composed at the request of Patiens. His reputation as a poet led Patiens to ask of him a metrical inscription for his great church at Lyons (II. x). The character of Constantius was a noble one, and his influence wide. When the capital of Auvergne was laid desolate by the Visigothic siege, Sidonius sent for him, and his arrival had the most salutary effect upon the desperate population (III. ii). He is supposed to have died at an advanced age about 488. Cf. *Hist. litt. de la France*, ii; Chaix, ii, p. 206.

Crocus. VII. vi. 9. Bishop. Considered by Sirmond to have occupied the see of Nîmes; but the only recorded Crocus lived in the seventh century. (Duchesne, *Fastes épiscopaux*, i, p. 313.)

Dardanus. V. ix. 1. Prefect of Gaul, *temp.* Honorius, 409–10. After his prefecture he appears to have embraced Christianity. Letters were addressed to him by Jerome and Augustine. For an inscription relating to him, cf. note, 60. 4, p. 237.

***Desideratus.** *II. viii. Friend: perhaps an ancestor of St. Desideratus, Bishop of Clermont after St. Avitus. His poetical judgement was highly valued in Auvergne, and Severianus considered it an advantage to publish a treatise on rhetoric under his auspices. (*Hist. litt. de la France*, ii, p. 576.)

***Domitius.** *II. ii. Friend. Perhaps born at Lyons, but teaching as a grammarian in the schools of Ameria. Mentioned in *Carm.* xxiv. 10–16 as a severe critic, and compared to the censorious person who had only laughed once in his life.

***Domnicius.** *IV. xx; V. xvii. 6. Friend.

***Domnulus.** *IV. xxv; IX. xiii. 4, xv. 1. Friend; living at Arles. Served as Quaestor. Poet and philosopher, with an interest in theology, and a Churchman. One of the four poets whom Majorian invited during his sojourn in Gaul.

Probably still living, as an old man, in 483 or 484. Cf. *Carm.* xiv; *Hist. litt. de la France*, ii, p. 507.

***Donidius.** *II. ix; III. v; VI. v. Friend. *Vir spectabilis*. Living on his ancestral estate at Eborolacum (Ébreuil, near Gannat), in the valley of the Sioule, part of which he lost during the disturbances of 474.

***Ecdicius.** *II. i; *III. iii; II. ii. 15; V. xvi. 1. Son of the emperor Avitus; brother of Papianilla and brother-in-law of Sidonius. Patrician. An athlete and patriot, who became the champion of his countrymen during the last resistance of Auvergne to Euric's aggression. Ecdicius continued the policy of his father Avitus in conciliating the barbaric princes, and his diplomacy confirmed the Burgundians in their support of the Gallo-Romans against Euric; but he was also a defender of the purity of the Latin language against encroaching barbarism. During the misery which followed Euric's invasion, Ecdicius rivalled Patiens in the generosity with which he relieved the starving. Some consider that he is the Isicius who succeeded Mamertus as Bishop of Vienne (Chaix, ii, p. 209). It is also thought that he is the Decius whom Jornandes describes as leaving his country in disgust after its surrender to the Goths (*Get.* xlv).

***Elaphius.** *IV. xv. Friend. Resident in Rodez, where he built a baptistery. Perhaps subsequently a bishop. (Ruricius, *Ep.* II. vii; *Gallia Christiana*, iii, p. 593; Tillemont, *Mém.* xvi, p. 260.)

***Eleutherius.** *VI. xi. Bishop. (Tillemont, *Mém.* xvi, p. 232.)

Eminentius. IV. xvii. 1. Friend of Arbogast.

Epiphanius. V. xvii. 10. *Scriba* or Secretary, either of Filimatius or Sidonius.

***Eriphius.** *V. xvii. Friend; of Lyons. Son-in-law of Filimatius.

Eucherius. IV. iii. 7. St. Eucherius, Bishop of Lyons, previously monk at Lerins, D. 449. Author of various treatises and homilies. Cf. *Carm.* xvi, l. 115; *Hist. litt. de la France*, ii, p. 275; Duchesne, *Fastes épiscopaux*, ii, p. 163.

***Eucherius.** *III. viii; VII. ix. 18. Friend. *Vir illustris.*

A man of integrity, for whom the decaying Roman empire found no important post. Sirmond conjectures him to be the same Eucherius who, under Count Victorius, when Euric had seized Auvergne, was falsely accused, and put to death. (Gregory of Tours, *Hist. Franc.* II. xx; Tillemont, *Mém.* xvi, p. 303.)

***Euphronius.** *VII. viii; *IX. ii; IV. xxv. 2. Bishop of Autun. His visit to Châlon with Patiens, described in IV. xxv, must have taken place about 470, when he was advanced in years. Of his writings, there remains only a letter written jointly with Lupus of Troyes to the Bishop of Angers on questions of ecclesiastical discipline. He died at a great age about 476. (*Hist. litt. de la France*, ii, p. 465; Chaix, ii, p. 74; Duchesne, *Fastes épiscopaux*, ii, p. 117.)

Euric (Eoricus, Evarix). VII. vi. 4; VIII. iii, ix. 5. Cf. I. vii. 5; II. i. 3; IV. viii. 1; VIII. ix. 1. King of the Visigoths. Murderer and successor of his brother Theodoric II. A bigoted Arian, conqueror, and energetic ruler, who extended his territory from Septimania, until by the conquest of Auvergne and Berry, and the cession by Odovakar of the last territory preserved to Rome in Provence, it embraced the whole of southern France outside the Burgundian dominions. Euric probably died in 484–5 in the nineteenth year of his reign (Jornandes, *Getica*, c. lvii), though Isidore of Seville and Gregory of Tours give different dates. Cf. Chaix, ii, p. 330.

Eusebius. IV. i. 3. Teacher of philosophy at Lyons, where he taught Sidonius and many of his friends.

Eustachius. VII. ii. 4, 9. Bishop of Marseilles.

Eutropia. VI. ii. 1, 4. A pious widow; possibly the same celebrated in the Roman martyrology among sainted widows on September 15. (Tillemont, *Mém.* xvi, 227.)

***Eutropius.** *VI. vi. Bishop of Orange. See *Acta Sanctorum* (May 27), p. 699; *Hist. litt. de la France*, ii, p. 473; Duchesne, *Fastes épiscopaux*, i, p. 265.

***Eutropius.** *I. vi; *III. vi. Lifelong friend; member of a noble family, distinguished for its official honours. Became Prefect of Gaul. Cf. Chaix, ii, p. 19.

Evanthius. V. xiii. 1. An official of public works under Seronatus.

***Evodius.** *IV. viii. Petitioner at the court of Euric, to whose queen, Ragnahild, he presented a silver cup.

***Explicius.** *II. vii. A jurisconsult, to whom Sidonius refers a dispute which his own efforts had failed to settle.

Faustinus. IV. iv. 1; vi. 1. Friend of Sidonius from his youth. Entered the Church, and perhaps became the successor of Hermentarius at Velay. (*Hist. litt. de la France*, ii, p. 551; cf. Chaix, ii, pp. 116, 118.)

Faustus. Born in Britain. Abbot of Lerins (433-4) for twenty-seven years, where he established a school. Subsequently Bishop of Riez (462). Preserved the ascetic habits of monastic life (IX. iii). Celebrated for his learning and eloquence. One of the four bishops nominated to treat with Euric (see **Leontius, Graecus, Basilius**). Preached at the dedication of Patiens' new church at Lyons (IX. iii). Published a famous letter maintaining the materiality of the soul (IV. iii; Guizot, *Hist. de la Civ. en France*, v. 165 f.), wrote against the Arians, for which he was exiled by Euric to the district of Limoges, where he enjoyed the intercourse of Ruricius; liberated in 484, and died at an advanced age (*c.* 490). His writings, which give evidence of a modified Pelagianism, were regarded as heretical after his death, but were not condemned in his lifetime. Cf. *Carm.* xvi. See *Hist. litt. de la France*, ii. 587; *Mon. Germ. Historica*, viii (Auctorum Antiquiss. pp. liv ff.); Chaix, i, pp. 248 9; ii, p. 294; Duchesne, *Fastes épiscopaux*, i, p. 284.

Felix, see **Magnus Felix.**

Ferreolus. VII. i. 7. Martyr: interred near Vienne.

Ferreolus, see **Tonantius Ferreolus.**

Filimatia (**Philimatia**). II. viii. Wife of Eriphius and daughter of Filimatius (?).

***Filimatius** (Philimatius, Philomathius). *I. iii; V. xvii. 10. Friend; of Lyons. Father-in-law of Eriphius; father of Filimatia (?); member of the Prefect's council. A man of vivacious temperament and poetical tastes. Cf. Chaix, ii, pp. 169, 297.

***Firminus.** *IX. i, xvi. Friend. A native of Arles. Incited Sidonius to publish the ninth book of the Letters. Ennodius of Pavia praises his learning and literary style (*Ep.* I. viii). He was of a generous character, and assisted St. Caesarius in a time of trouble. Cf. *Hist. litt. de la France*, ii, p. 684.

***Florentinus.** *IV. xix. Friend.

***Fonteius.** *VI. vii; *VII. iv. Bishop of Vaison from about A.D. 450. Sidonius praises his charming character. He seems to have exerted over the Burgundian princes an influence which enabled him to be of great service to the Gallo-Romans of his diocese. Cf. Chaix, ii, p. 106; Duchesne, *Fastes épiscopaux*, i, p. 262.

***Fortunalis.** *VIII. v. Friend. Lived in Spain (Tarragona), and witnessed the conquest of Iberia by the Visigoths in 478–80.

Fronto. IV. xxi. Grandfather of Aper (*q. v.*). Possibly the Count twice sent as ambassador to the Suevi in Spain, first by Valentinian, then by Avitus.

Gallicinus. VIII. xi. 3 (v. 39 of the poem). Bishop.

Gallus. VI. ix. A man living in the diocese of Troyes, whom Sidonius persuaded to return to his wife. Cf. Chaix, ii, p. 80.

***Gaudentius.** *I. iv; I. iii. 2; III. xii. 4. Friend. Of tribunician rank. Became Vicarius of the Seven Provinces. Called *venerabilis* in III. xii. 4.

***Gelasius.** *IX. xv; IX. xvi. 1. Friend.

Germanicus. IV. xiii. 1. Resident at or near Chantelle in the Bourbonnais, and a neighbour of Vectius. Described by Sidonius as a juvenile sexagenarian. Cf. Chaix, ii, p. 242.

Germanus. VIII. xv. 1. Bishop of Auxerre.

Gerontius. V. ix. 1. Commander in Spain under the 'tyrant' Constantine (*q. v.*), but rose against Constans, the tyrant's son, whom he drove from Spain into Gaul, and slew at Vienne. He then besieged Constantine in Arles, but on the arrival of Honorius' general Constantius, was abandoned by his men, and flying to Spain, there perished (411). Cf. Gregory of Tours, *Hist. Franc.* II. ix.

Gozolas. III. iv. 1; IV. v. 1. A Jew.

***Graecus.** *VI. viii; *VII. ii, vii, xi; *IX. iv; VII. vi. 10. Bishop of Marseilles. Charged by Julius Nepos to negotiate with Euric, together with Leontius of Arles, Basilius of Aix, and Faustus of Riez. Cf. Introduction, p. xlii.

Gratianensis. I. xi. 10, 13. *Vir illustris.* Guest at the banquet of Majorian.

Heliodorus. IV. x. 1. Mentioned as *filius meus*, but probably no relation of Sidonius.

***Herenius** (Heronius). *I. v, ix. Friend; of Lyons. A cultivated man, interested in geographical and historical questions, and a poet. (*Hist. litt. de la France*, ii, p. 437.)

***Hesperius.** *II. x; IV. xxii. 1. Friend. Man of letters; also intimate with Leo.

Himerius. VII. xiii. 1. A priest, or possibly bishop. Son of Sulpicius, and pupil of Lupus at Troyes. (*Hist. litt. de la France*, ii, p. 490.)

***Hypatius.** *III. v. Friend. A person with influence in the neighbourhood of Ébreuil. Cf. Chaix, ii, p. 149.

***Industrius.** *IV. ix. Friend.

Injuriosus. IX. x. 1. A dependant (clerk?) who left Sidonius for Aprunculus, bishop of Langres.

Innocentius. VI. ix. 3. A *vir spectabilis.*

Johannes. II. v. 1. A friend involved in legal difficulties; introduced by Sidonius to the jurisconsult Petronius.

Johannes. IV. xxv. 3. Bishop of Châlon, consecrated by Patiens and Euphronius. Cf. Duchesne, *Fastes épiscopaux*, ii, p. 192.

***Johannes.** *VIII. ii. Friend. Grammarian, teaching in Aquitaine under Visigothic rule.

Jovinus. V. ix. 'Tyrant.' Assumed the purple while Constantine was being besieged by Constantius at Arles (411). Defeated and slain at Narbonne in 412 by Ataulf the Visigoth, acting on behalf of Honorius. Cf. *Carm.* XXIII. i. 173.

Julianus. IX. v. Bishop. Perhaps of some see in Gallia Narbonensis. Cf. Chaix, ii, p. 149.

Julius Nepos. V. xvi. Cf. V. vi. 2, vii. 1; VIII. vii. 4. Emperor, A.D. 474–5, in whose reign Auvergne was lost to the empire. Cf. Introduction, p. xliii.

***Justinus.** *V. xxi. Friend. Brother of Sacerdos. Their brotherly affection was celebrated. Cf. *Carm.* xxiv. 26 ff.

Justus. V. xvii. 3. Saint. Bishop of Lyons, d. *c.* 390. The church erected by Patiens on the site of the old church of the Maccabees at Lyons was known by his name.

Justus. II. xii. 3. A doctor attending Severiana.

***Lampridius.** *VIII. ix.; VIII. xi. 3; IX. xiii. 2, 4. Friend. Poet and orator of Bordeaux. A man of great versatility, whom Fertig calls 'the Goethe of his age'. He ingratiated himself with Euric, and was probably thus enabled to assist Sidonius in regaining his liberty. Murdered by his household slaves. Cf. *Hist. litt. de la France*, ii, p. 494.

***Leo.** *IV. xxii; *VIII. iii; IX. xiii. 2, xv. 1. Minister of Euric. A native of Narbonne and descendant of the orator Fronto, whose talent he inherited. He also bore a high reputation as poet (*Rex Castalii Chori*, IX. xiii), philosopher, orator, and jurist: Appius Claudius himself would be silent when Leo expounded the law of the Twelve Tables (*Carm.* xxiii. 446). Though a Catholic, he was selected by Euric as minister, in which capacity he doubtless made easier the lot of many of his co-religionists. While Sidonius was in banishment Leo encouraged him to occupy himself with the life of Apollonius of Tyana; and the intercession of the powerful minister must have contributed to his release. Leo was still living about 483. Cf. *Carm.* ix. 314, XIV. xxiii. 446 ff.; *Hist. litt. de la France*, ii, pp. 627 ff.

***Leontius.** *VI. iii. Bishop of Arles, and friend of Pope Hilary, who confirmed the privileges of his see as the first in Gaul. Friend of Faustus, Felix, and Ruricius (cf. **Ruricius**, *Ep.* I. xv). Arranged terms of peace with Euric in company with Basilius, Graecus, and Faustus. Cf. Chaix, ii, p. 189.

Leontius, see **Pontius Leontius.**

Licinianus. III. vii. 2; V. xvi. 1. Quaestor; envoy from Julius Nepos to Gaul at the time of Euric's invasion of Auvergne.

Livia. VIII. xi. 3 (l. 34 of the poem). Mother of Pontius Leontius (*q. v.*).

***Lucontius** (Lucentius). *IV. xviii. Friend.

***Lupus,** St., d. 479. *VI. i, iv, ix; *VIII. xi; *IX. xi; IV. xvii. 3; VII. xiii. 1; VIII. xiv. 2, xv. 1. Saint. Born at Toul. Bishop of Troyes. In 451 he persuaded Attila to spare the city. After separating from his wife Pimeniola, sister of St. Hilarius, resided at Lerins first as a monk under Honoratus, subsequently as abbot. (Cf. *Carm.* xvi. 11.) Summoned to the see of Troyes in 426 or 427. Opponent of Pelagianism. On Sidonius' election to Clermont, Lupus wrote him a still extant letter of congratulation, the terms of which seem to imply a previous intimacy in spite of their disparity in age. Lupus was no less eminent for his learning than for the austerity of his life. (IV. xvii.) Bollandists, *Acta Sanctorum*, July 29; Chaix, i, p. 442: *Hist. litt. de la France*, ii, pp. 486 ff.; Duchesne, *Fastes épiscopaux*, ii, p. 449.

***Lupus**. *VIII. xi. Friend. Rhetor, residing at Périgueux or Agen, the former being his native city. A man of literary taste with a predilection for science. Cf. *Hist. litt. de la France*, ii, p. 583.

Magnus. I. xi. 10. Senator of Narbonne. Consul in 460. Prefect of Gaul in 469. Father of Probus and Magnus Felix, both of whom were friends of Sidonius. Uncle of Camillus. A great personage in Gaul, where he was widely respected for his integrity and practical wisdom. Cf. *Carm.* XIV. xxiii. 455; xxiv. 90.

***Magnus Felix.** *II. iii; *III. iv, vii; *IV. v, x. Friend. Son of Magnus and brother of Probus. 'Patrician.' Lived at Narbonne. Schoolfellow of Sidonius, to whom the latter dedicated his poems. Cf. *Carm.* ix. 330, xxiv. 91; Chaix, ii, p. 294.

Majorianus, Julius Valerius. I. xi. 2; IX. xiii. 4. Roman Emperor. Distinguished soldier and comrade of Aëtius and Ricimer. Raised to the throne by the latter in 457. Pardoned Sidonius for his share in the insurrection of Lyons after the deposition of Avitus, and during his visit to

Gaul treated him with distinction. Majorian was a wise ruler, who sought to stem the progress of imperial decay; he defeated the Vandals in Italy, but his preparations for an attack upon them in Africa were thwarted by the burning of his fleet, and, having incurred the enmity of Ricimer, he was assassinated by his own troops at Tortona in 461. The Panegyric on Majorian is *Carm.* v. Cf. Introduction, p. xxi.

Mamertus. *VII. i; IV. xi. 6; V. xiv. 2; Saint. Bishop of Vienne. Brother of Claudianus Mamertus. Introduced, at a time of public disaster, the Rogations, which were afterwards adopted by Sidonius at Clermont. Incurred the displeasure of Pope Hilary in connexion with the bishopric of Die. Cf. Chaix, ii, p. 112; Duchesne, *Fastes épiscopaux*, i, p. 205.

***Mamertus, Claudianus.** *IV. iii; IV. xi. 1; V. ii. 1. Writer of IV. ii. Priest. Brother of St. Mamertus, bishop of Vienne. Learned in philosophy, and author of a well-known treatise, *De Natura Animae*, in three books, a reply to a letter of Faustus, Bishop of Riez (*q. v.*), maintaining the material nature of the soul. Friend of Salvian, who dedicated to him his work on Ecclesiastes. Cf. Guizot, *Hist. de la Civ. en France*, i, pp. 166 ff.; Chaix, i, p. 361.

Marcellinus. II. xiii. 1. A jurisconsult of Narbonne, described in *Carm.* xxiii, l. 465, as of a frank outspoken character, but amiable and a man of many friends, among whom was Serranus (*q. v.*).

Marcellinus. I. xi. Distinguished soldier. Served under Aëtius, after whose death he withdrew to Dalmatia and established a practically independent state. On the death of Avitus the diadem was apparently offered him by a party in Gaul, to which Sidonius belonged, and which was subdued by Majorian. Cf. Introduction, p. xx.

***Maurusius.** *II. xiv. Landed proprietor, and friend.

Maximus. VIII. xiv. 2. Abbot of Lerins, and afterwards Bishop of Riez. Cf. *Carm.* xvi, ll. 112, 128.

Maximus. IV. xxiv. Friend. Formerly in the Palatine service, subsequently a cleric, possibly bishop, living near Toulouse. Cf. Chaix, ii, p. 235.

***Megethius.** *VII. iii. Bishop, possibly of Belley. (Sirmond.)

Megethius. VIII. xiv. 8. Cleric. Acting as messenger between Principius and Sidonius. Cf. IX. viii. 1.

Menstruanus. II. vi. 1. Friend of Sidonius and Pegasius.

Modaharius. VII. vi. 2. A Visigothic Arian confuted by Basilius.

***Montius.** *I. xi. Friend.

Namatius. *VIII. vi. Friend. 'Admiral' of Euric on the West Coast. He had a villa at Saintes, and apparently an estate in Oléron. Studied architecture. (*Hist. litt. de la France*, ii, p. 576.)

Nicetius, Flavius. VIII. vi. 2. Cf. III. i. 3; VIII. vi. 8. Advocate of Lyons. Chosen by common consent to deliver a panegyric at the inauguration of the Consul Astyrius at Arles in 449. An admirer of Sidonius' writings. (*Hist. litt. de la France*, ii, p. 500.)

***Nunechius.** *VIII. xiii. Bishop of Nantes. He was present at the Council of Vannes in 465.

***Nymphidius.** *V. ii. Friend. Grandfather of Polemius. Cf. *Carm.* xv. 200.

Optantius. II. iv. 2, 3. *Vir clarissimus.* The deceased father of a girl demanded in marriage by Proiectus, to whom Sidonius gives a letter of introduction.

***Oresius.** *IX. xii. Friend; living in Spain.

Paeonius. I. xi. A parvenu and ambitious demagogue. During the interregnum, after the death of Avitus, he usurped the position of Prefect of Gaul. In this capacity he made himself essential to the young nobles who participated in the 'conspiracy of Marcellinus'. After his term of office he was given senatorial rank, but did not succeed, like Sidonius, in conciliating the favour of Majorian; to this cause perhaps was due the enmity which he displayed in the affair of the anonymous satire. Cf. Introduction, p. xxii.

***Pannychius.** *V. xiii; VII. ix. 18. Friend. *Vir illustris.* Living at Bourges.

*** Papianilla.** *V. xvi. Cf. II. ii. 3, xii. 2; V. xvi. 3;

Carm. xviii. 1. Wife. Daughter of Avitus and sister of Ecdicius (*q.v.*). Cf. Gregory of Tours, *Hist. Franc.* II. xxi, and Introduction, p. xiii.

***Pastor.** *V. xx. Friend.

Paterninus. IV. xvi. 1. Bearer of a letter from Ruricius.

***Patiens.** *VI. xii.; II. x. 2; IV. xxv. 1, 3, 5. Cf. III. xii. 3. Saint. Archbishop of Lyons from before 470. A man of great wealth, which he employed in the building and restoration of churches and in the relief of the needy in times of national distress. (Gregory of Tours, *Hist. Franc.* II. xxiv.) Sidonius is our chief authority for Patiens. Cf. *Acta Sanctorum*, September 11; *Hist. litt. de la France*, ii, p. 54; Chaix, ii, p. 304; Duchesne, *Fastes épiscopaux*, ii, p. 163.

Paulus. IV. xxv. 1. Bishop of Châlon.

Paulus. I. ix. 1. Of prefectorian rank. Host of Sidonius at Rome.

Paulus. II. vii. Party to a dispute with Alethius, which Sidonius refers for settlement to Explicius.

***Pegasius.** *I. vi. Friend.

***Perpetuus.** *VII. ix.; IV. xviii. 4, 5, &c. Bishop of Tours. Soon after his accession he convened a council at Tours to regulate ecclesiastical discipline and remedy abuse; four years later he summoned another at Vannes. His devotion to the memory of St. Martin led him to erect the basilica described by Sidonius in place of the earlier church. He was an intimate friend of Euphronius, whom he survived. Cf. Gregory of Tours, *Hist. Franc.* II. xiv; X. xxxi; *Hist. litt. de la France*, ii, pp. 619 ff.; Duchesne, *Fastes épiscopaux*, ii, p. 300.

***Petreius.** *IV. xi. Friend. Nephew of Claudianus Mamertus.

***Petronius.** *II. v; *V. i; *VIII. i; I. vii. 4; VIII. xvi. 1. Eminent jurisconsult of Arles and lover of letters. Associated with Tonantius Ferreolus in the impeachment of Arvandus. Persuaded Sidonius to publish the eighth book of the Letters. *Hist. litt. de la France*, ii, pp. 581 ff.

Petrus. IX. xiii. 4; xv. 1. Born in North Italy. Secretary (*magister epistolarum*) of Majorian. Sidonius, in the Prologue to the Panegyric in honour of that Emperor, describes Petrus as his Maecenas; and it was probably owing to the intercession of this friend that he made his peace after the rebellion at Lyons. (*Carm.* v. 569–71; ix. 305.) Petrus had also gifts of eloquence and style, and was no mean poet. After the assassination of Majorian he devoted himself to literary interests, and is said to have died in 473 or 474. (*Hist. litt. de la France*, ii, p. 439.)

Petrus. VII. xi. 2. Of tribunician rank.

***Philagrius** (Filagrius). *VII. xiv. Cf. II. iii. 1. Known to Sidonius by reputation only as a man of culture and erudition. Connected with the families of Avitus and Magnus Felix. Cf. *Carm.* vii. 156, xxiv. 93; *Hist. litt. de la France*, ii, pp. 41, 576.

***Placidus.** *III. xiv. Friend; of Grenoble. A man of literary tastes, who appreciated the writings of Sidonius.

***Polemius.** *IV. xiv. Friend. Descendant of Tacitus. Prefect of Gaul. Of philosophical tastes, and a student of Plato. Cf. *Carm.* xiv (an epithalamium for the marriage of Polemius and Araneola). Cf. also Chaix, i, p. 347; ii. 254; *Hist. litt. de la France*, ii, pp. 514 ff.

Pontius Leontius. VIII. xi. 3; xii. 5. Of Bordeaux, in the neighbourhood of which was situated his fine villa, Burgus. A personage of great importance in Aquitaine (*Facile primus Aquitanorum*). Sidonius has celebrated the elegance and hospitality of Burgus in his twenty-second poem. Cf. *Hist. litt. de la France*, ii, p. 409.

Pontius Paulinus. VIII. xii. 5. Son of Pontius Leontius. Friend. Native of Aquitaine. A poet, chiefly devoting himself to religious subjects. Cf. *Carm.* ix. 304; Tillemont, *Mémoires*, xvi, p. 404; *Hist. litt. de la France*, ii, p. 470.

***Potentinus.** *V. xi. Friend. Regarded by Sidonius as the model for his young son Apollinaris.

***Pragmatius.** *VI. ii. Bishop. Probably not Pragmatius of Autun. Cf. Chaix, ii, p. 97.

Pragmatius. V. x. 1, 2. A man of eloquence and personal charm, adopted as son-in-law by Priscus Valerianus. Cf. *Hist. litt. de la France*, ii, pp. 499, 580.

***Principius.** *VIII. xiv; *IX. viii. Bishop of Soissons. Elder brother of St. Remi. Cf. *Hist. litt. de la France*, ii, p. 668.

***Probus.** *IV. i. Friend from schooldays. Husband of Eulalia, cousin of Sidonius; elder brother of Magnus Felix (*q. v.*), and son of Magnus. A man of literary taste and precocious ability. Cf. *Carm.* ix. 329–34; xxiv. 95–8; *Hist. litt. de la France*, ii, p. 649.

***Proculus.** *IV. xxiii; IX. xv. Friend. Of Ligurian origin; poet and man of letters. (*Hist. litt. de la France*, ii, p. 538.)

Proculus. IX. ii. 1. A deacon.

Proiectus. II. iv. 1. *Vir clarissimus*. Betrothed to the daughter of Optantius, and introduced by Sidonius to his friend Sagittarius (or Syagrius).

Promotus. VIII. xiii. 3. A Jew.

***Prosper.** *VIII. xv. Bishop of Orleans. Only known from this letter and from his mention by Bede. Invited Sidonius, at the time of his exile, to write a history of Attila's attack on Orleans. Cf. Duchesne, *Fastes épiscopaux*, ii, p. 456.

Prudens. VI. iv. 2. Witness to the sale of a slave.

***Pudens.** *V. xix. Friend.

Ragnahild. IV. viii. 5. Queen of Euric. Her name is only known through Sidonius.

***Remigius** (Remi). *IX. vii. Cf. VIII. xiv. 'Apostle of the Franks.' Saint. Bishop of Reims. Born *c.* 458, in or near Laon; son of Count Emilius and Celinia, and brother of Principius. Elected at an early age to the see of Reims by popular compulsion (*Raptus potius quam electus*—Hincmar). Baptized Clovis in 496, using on this occasion the famous words bidding the King adore what he had burned and burn what he had adored. Author of Addresses (*Declamationes*), highly praised by Sidonius, but no longer extant. Cf. *Hist. litt. de la France*, iii, p. 156; Chaix, ii, p. 88.

Ricimer. I. v. 10; ix. 1. The famous 'king-maker',

who raised emperors to the throne (Majorian, Severus) or deposed them (Avitus), but never assumed the diadem himself. He was the son of a Suevic father and a Gothic mother (cf. *Carm.* ii. 361 ff.), and comrade of Majorian (*Carm.* v. 267). He married the daughter of Anthemius (I. v), but quarrelled with that Emperor, and a war ensuing, died shortly after his antagonist. Cf. Introduction, p. xix.

Riochatus. IX. ix. A priest (or bishop) and monk (*antistes ac monachus*), who visited Clermont, bearing with him works by Faustus of Riez.

***Riothamus.** *III. ix. Commander of the Bretons engaged to join the Empire in resisting the advance of the Visigoths. He engaged Euric before Roman support could reach him and was defeated by that king at Bourg-de-Déols on the Indre, whereupon he took refuge with the Burgundians. Cf. Introduction, p. xxxvi.

Roscia. V. xvi. 5. Daughter of Sidonius and Papianilla. Cf. Introduction, p. xiv.

***Ruricius.** *IV. xvi; *V. xv; *VIII. x. Friend. Member of a patrician family connected with the Gens Anicia. Married, before 470, Iberia, daughter of the Arvernian Ommatius, Sidonius writing their epithalamium (*Carm.* xi). After some years, he renounced the world for a life of piety. In 484 he became Bishop of Limoges. Author of two books of Letters, in which an imitation of Sidonius is sometimes apparent. These mostly date from the time previous to his episcopate, and though exemplary in their piety, and showing an admirable character, contain little of interest for the historian. Of them Bk. I. ix, xvi are addressed to Sidonius. (*Hist. litt. de la France*, iii, pp. 49–56.) See also Krusch, *Mon. Germ. Historica*, viii (Auctorum Antiquissimorum, pp. lxii ff.).

***Rusticus,** Decimus. V. ix. 1. Succeeded his friend Apollinaris as Prefect of Gaul at the time of the tyrant Constantine (409). Captured and slain in Auvergne by the generals of Honorius a few years later. Grandfather of Aquilinus. Cf. Gregory of Tours, *Hist. Franc.* II. c. ix.

Rusticus. V. ix. 2. Son of the preceding. Tribune and

notary under Honorius, with the father of Sidonius, and subsequently a vicarius.

Rusticus. V. ix. 4. Son of Aquilinus (?).

***Rusticus** (Rusticius). *II. xi; VIII. xi. 3 (v. 36 of the poem). Friend; living near Bordeaux. (*Hist. litt. de la France*, ii, p. 428.)

***Sacerdos.** *V. xxi. Friend. Brother of Justinus (*q. v.*). Cf. *Carm.* xxiv. 27.

***Sagittarius** (?). *II. iv. Friend. The MS. C gives the name of the recipient of this letter as Syagrius.

***Salonius.** *VII. xv. Friend; living at Vienne. Some have considered him to be the son of St. Eucherius of the same name, who was a bishop when Sidonius was quite young, but this view is not universally accepted. (*Hist. litt. de la France*, ii, p. 433; Tillemont, *Mémoires*, xvi, p. 207; Sirmond, note to VII. xv.)

***Sapaudus.** *V. x. Friend. Rhetor of Vienne. For his studies he received the advice of Claudianus Mamertus, and sought to inspire himself from the earlier Roman writers. (*Hist. litt. de la France*, ii, p. 498.)

***Secundinus.** *V. viii; II. x. 3; V. viii. 1. Poet of Lyons. Associated with Constantius and Sidonius in writing metrical inscriptions for the church erected by Patiens. Wrote a satire exposing the merciless cruelty of Gundobad, one of the Burgundian 'tetrarchs', to his brothers and their families. (*Hist. litt. de la France*, ii, p. 502.)

***Secundus.** *II. xii. Nephew of Sidonius, or grandson of one of his uncles (Mommsen, *Praefatio*, p. xlvii).

Seronatus. II. i. 1; V. xiii. 1, 4; VII. vii. 2. Perhaps Governor of Aquitanica Prima (cf. Introduction, p. xxxviii). He was guilty of more open treason and even worse oppression than his predecessor. The people of Auvergne brought him to justice, and he received the penalty of death. Cf. Tillemont, *Hist. des Empereurs*, vi, p. 352; Chaix, i, p. 377.

***Serranus.** *II. xiii. Friend; living at Narbonne. Adherent of the Emperor Petronius Maximus. Friend of Marcellinus.

Severiana. II. xii. Daughter (?) of Sidonius. Cf. Introduction, p. xiv.

Severianus. IX. xiii. 4; xv. 1. A poet of repute in Gaul, considered to rank with Domnulus, Lampridius and Sidonius. In his prose work he is compared by the latter to Quintilian. Cf. *Carm.* ix. 312; *Hist. litt. de la France*, ii, p. 509.

Severinus. I. xi. 10, 16. Consul of the year 461. Guest at the banquet of Majorian.

Sigismer. IV. xx. A young Frankish (?) prince. Cf. Introduction, p. xciii.

Simplicius. VII. vi. 9. A bishop.

Simplicius. VII. viii. 2, 3; ix. 16, 25. Son of Eulogius and son-in-law of Palladius, both bishops of Bourges. Nominated by Sidonius to the same see. (Chaix, ii, p. 20.)

***Simplicius.** *V. iv; III. xi; IV. iv, vii, xii; VII. iv. Perhaps brother of Apollinaris (*q.v.*).

***Sulpicius.** *VII. xiii. Friend.

Syagrius, Flavius Afranius (I). I. vii. 4; V. xvii. 4. Cf. V. v. 1; VIII. viii. 3. Of Lyons. General of Valentinian; subsequently *Praefectus Praetorio* in Gaul and consul in 382. Buried at Lyons, where his monument is mentioned by Sidonius (as above). His daughter Papianilla was the mother of Tonantius Ferreolus (*q.v.*).

***Syagrius.** *V. v; *VIII. viii. Great-grandson of the preceding. Man of letters. At one period living much at the Burgundian court; at another on his estate of Taionnacus near Autun. It seems best to follow the Benedictine *Histoire littéraire de la France*, ii, p. 651, in regarding this personage as distinct from Syagrius, son of Aegidius of Soissons, defeated by Clovis in 486. Sirmond and others, however, regard V. v. at least, if not both letters, as written to that Syagrius. The objection to this view is that the ruler of Soissons would hardly have been able to live among Burgundians or in a country-house so far away from his proper sphere of interest.

Symmachus Quintus Aurelius. I. i. 1; II. x. 5; cf. VIII. x. 1. Flourished in the second half of the fourth century. Consul 391. Famous as an orator, though most of his speeches are lost. His *Letters* survive in ten books, and are written in a style which compared with that of Sidonius is simple and

direct. The best known is that relating to the proposed restoration of the altar of Victory in the Senate. Cf. *Carm.* ix. 304.

***Tetradius.** *III. x. Friend. A jurisconsult of Arles. Cf. *Carm.* xxiv. 80–3; *Hist. litt. de la France*, ii, pp. 577–8.

***Thaumastus.** *I. vii; I. vii. 4; V. vi. 1. Friend. Brother of Apollinaris. Associated with Tonantius Ferreolus in the impeachment of Arvandus. Cf. *Carm.* xxiv. 85.

Theodoric II (Theudericus). I. ii. 1; II. i. 3. King of the Visigoths (453–66). Son of the Theodoric who fell in the battle of Maurica. Succeeded in 453 after the assassination of his brother Thorismond. Supported the election of Avitus as emperor, having been acquainted with him in former years, and on his deposition and death opposed Majorian, by whom he was defeated before Arles. Afterwards once more reconciled to the Empire, but assassinated by his brother Euric in 466. Cf. *Carm.* vii. 262, &c.; and see Introduction, p. xvi.

Theodorus. III. x. 1. *Vir clarissimus.* Introduced by Sidonius to the jurisconsult Tetradius.

***Theoplastus.** *VI. v. Bishop of Geneva (?). (Duchesne, *Fastes épiscopaux*, i, p. 227.)

Thorismond (Thorismodus). VII. xii. 3. King of the Visigoths. Son of Theodoric I, who died in the great battle of Maurica, and brother of Theodoric II, by whom he was assassinated in 453. Besieged Arles soon after the defeat of Attila, but was induced to withdraw through the practical diplomacy of Tonantius Ferreolus (*q. v.*).

***Tonantius Ferreolus.** *VII. xii. 1; I. vii. 4; II. ix. 1. Grandson of the Consul Afranius Syagrius, and through his mother, Papianilla, connected with the Aviti. An important Gallo-Roman noble, son of a Prefect of the Gauls, himself three times Prefect, and Patrician. With Avitus, he was instrumental in arranging the co-operation of the Visigoths with the Romans, which resulted in the defeat of Attila at Maurica by Aëtius. He was gifted with diplomatic powers which enabled him to save the town of Arles when besieged by the new Visigothic king Thorismond, at the trifling cost of a dinner (VII. xii), but his qualities as a strong and just

administrator led to his selection, after his official career, as the principal accuser of Arvandus (I. vii). His tastes were cultivated; cf. the description which Sidonius gives of his country-house Prusianum (II. ix). Born about 420, he died about 485, and was thus a lifelong contemporary of his friend Sidonius. Cf. *Carm.* xxiv, l. 36; *Hist. litt. de la France*, iii, p. 540.

***Tonantius**. *IX. xiii; IX. xv. Son of Tonantius Ferreolus. Cf. *Carm.* xxiv. 34.

***Trygetius**. *VIII. xii. According to Sirmond, the same Trygetius sent on an embassy to Attila with St. Leo and Avienus. At the time of Sidonius' visit to his friends at Bordeaux, Trygetius was living at his house at Bazas. Cf. Chaix, ii, pp. 225–6.

***Turnus**. *IV. xxiv. Friend. Son of Turpio.

Turpio. IV. xxiv. Friend; of tribunician rank. On his death-bed requested Sidonius to help his family in the matter of a debt to Maximus. See **Turnus**.

Valerianus, Priscus. V. x. 2. Prefect of Gaul, and relative of the Emperor Avitus. Father-in-law of Pragmatius. Consulted by Sidonius on the merits of his Panegyric of Avitus. Cf. *Carm.* viii. See also *Hist. litt. de la France*, ii, p. 360; Chaix, ii, p. 183.

***Vectius** (Vettius). *IV. xiii; IV. ix. 1. Friend. A noble living in the world, but practising austerities in secret. His home was near Chantelle in the Bourbonnais. (Chaix, ii, p. 239.)

Victorius. VII. xvii. 1. Cf. IV. x. 2. Appointed Count of Auvergne by Euric, after he obtained possession of that country in 475. Probably the *patronus* of IV. x. 2. Gregory of Tours, who describes him as duke, gives him a much worse character than Sidonius (*Hist. Franc.* II. xx. and *De gloria Confessorum*, c. xxxiii).

Victorius. V. xxi. Uncle of Sacerdos and Justin. Sirmond thinks it probable that the person to whom this letter is addressed is Victorius of Aquitaine, who in 457 under the Consulate of Constantine and Rufus composed the Paschal Cycle, and had some repute as a poet (cf. V. x). His

home was among the hills of the Gabalitani, now the district of La Lozère. (*Hist. litt. de la France*, ii, pp. 419, 424.) The poet and the author of the Cycle are distinguished.

***Vincentius.** *I. vii. Friend.

Vindicius. V. i. 2; VII. iv. 1. Friend. A deacon of Auvergne, who assisted Sidonius in his literary work.

***Volusianus.** *VII. xvii; IV. xviii. 2. Intimate friend. At Sidonius' request he assisted with advice and support Auxanius (*q. v.*), successor of St. Abraham, as abbot of the monastery of St. Cirgues, near Clermont. On the death of Perpetuus he became bishop of Tours. (Chaix, ii, pp. 222, 224.)

BOOK I

I

To his friend Constantius

c. A.D. 477

WITH all the influence you derive from a genius for 1
sound advice, you have long urged me to correct, revise, and bring together in one volume the more finished of those occasional letters which matters, men, and times have drawn from me: I am to set presumptuous foot where Symmachus of the ample manner, and Pliny of the perfected art have gone before. Of Cicero as letter- 2
writer I had best be dumb; not Julius Titianus himself, in his *Letters of Famous Women*, could worthily reproduce that model;[1] he tried to imitate a style which was not of his time, and Fronto's other pupils,[2] in their jealousy, called him 'ape of orators' for his pains. I have always been horribly conscious how far I fall short of these great examples; I have consistently claimed for each the privilege of his own period and genius. But I have done your will; here you have the letters, 3
not merely to revise, for that is nothing, but to polish and, as the phrase goes, clear of lees. Do I not know you devoted not to studies only, but to the studious too? Which devotion now makes you launch me, despite my fears, upon this deep main of ambition. I had been safer had I breathed no word about these 4

trifles, content with the reception of my poems,[1] which good luck surely helped to recognition rather than skill of mine. Such fame as I have should be to me an anchor cast in the haven of safe repute. I ought to be content with it after the envious snarls of all the Scyllas which my ship has passed. But if the tooth of jealousy spares these extravagances of mine, volume shall follow upon volume, all full-brimming with my most copious flow of correspondence. Farewell.

II

*To [his brother-in-law] Agricola**

A. D. 454 (?)

You have often begged a description of Theodoric the Gothic king, whose gentle breeding fame commends to every nation; you want him in his quantity and quality, in his person, and the manner of his existence. I gladly accede, as far as the limits of my page allow, and highly approve so fine and ingenuous a curiosity.

Well, he is a man worth knowing, even by those who cannot enjoy his close acquaintance, so happily have Providence and Nature joined to endow him with the perfect gifts of fortune; his way of life is such that not even the envy which lies in wait for kings can rob him
2 of his proper praise. And first as to his person. He is well set up, in height above the average man, but below the giant. His head is round, with curled hair retreating somewhat from brow to crown. His nervous

* Translated by Hodgkin, *Italy and her Invaders*, ii. 352. The king here described is Theodoric II, successor of Thorismund, predecessor of Euric.

neck is free from disfiguring knots.[1] The eyebrows are bushy and arched; when the lids droop, the lashes reach almost half-way down the cheeks. The upper ears are buried under overlying locks, after the fashion of his race. The nose is finely aquiline; the lips are thin and not enlarged by undue distension of the mouth. Every day the hair springing from his nostrils is cut back; that on the face springs thick from the hollow of the temples, but the razor has not yet come upon his cheek, and his barber is assiduous in eradicating the rich growth on the lower part of the face.[2] Chin, 3
throat, and neck are full, but not fat, and all of fair complexion; seen close, their colour is fresh as that of youth; they often flush, but from modesty, and not from anger. His shoulders are smooth, the upper- and fore-arms strong and hard; hands broad, breast prominent; waist receding. The spine dividing the broad expanse of back does not project, and you can see the springing of the ribs; the sides swell with salient muscle, the well-girt flanks are full of vigour. His thighs are like hard horn; the knee-joints firm and masculine; the knees themselves the comeliest and least wrinkled in the world. A full ankle supports the leg, and the foot is small to bear such mighty limbs.

Now for the routine of his public life. Before day- 4
break he goes with a very small suite to attend the service of his priests.[3] He prays with assiduity, but, if I may speak in confidence, one may suspect more of habit than conviction in this piety. Administrative duties of the kingdom take up the rest of the morning. Armed nobles stand about the royal seat; the mass of guards in their garb of skins are admitted that they may

be within call, but kept at the threshold for quiet's sake; only a murmur of them comes in from their post at the doors, between the curtain and the outer barrier.[1] And now the foreign envoys are introduced. The king hears them out, and says little; if a thing needs more discussion he puts it off, but accelerates matters ripe for dispatch. The second hour arrives; he rises from the throne to inspect his treasure-chamber or stable.

5 If the chase is the order of the day, he joins it, but never carries his bow at his side, considering this derogatory to royal state. When a bird or beast is marked for him, or happens to cross his path, he puts his hand behind his back and takes the bow from a page with the string all hanging loose; for as he deems it a boy's trick to bear it in a quiver, so he holds it effeminate to receive the weapon ready strung. When it is given him, he sometimes holds it in both hands and bends the extremities towards each other; at others he sets it, knot-end downward, against his lifted heel, and runs his finger up the slack and wavering string. After that, he takes his arrows, adjusts, and lets fly. He will ask you beforehand what you would like him to transfix; you choose, and he hits. If there is a miss through either's error, your vision will mostly be at fault, and not the archer's skill.

6 On ordinary days, his table resembles that of a private person. The board does not groan beneath a mass of dull and unpolished silver set on by panting servitors; the weight lies rather in the conversation than in the plate; there is either sensible talk or none. The hangings[2] and draperies used on these occasions are sometimes of purple silk, sometimes only of linen; art,

not costliness, commends the fare, as spotlessness rather than bulk the silver. Toasts are few, and you will oftener see a thirsty guest impatient, than a full one refusing cup or bowl. In short, you will find elegance of Greece, good cheer of Gaul, Italian nimbleness, the state of public banquets with the attentive service of a private table, and everywhere the discipline of a king's house. What need for me to describe the pomp of his feast days? No man is so unknown as not to know of them. But to my theme again. The siesta after 7
dinner is always slight, and sometimes intermitted. When inclined for the board-game,[1] he is quick to gather up the dice, examines them with care, shakes the box with expert hand, throws rapidly, humorously apostrophizes them, and patiently waits the issue. Silent at a good throw, he makes merry over a bad, annoyed by neither fortune, and always the philosopher. He is too proud to ask or to refuse a revenge; he disdains to avail himself of one if offered; and if it is opposed will quietly go on playing. You effect recovery of your men without obstruction on his side; he recovers his without collusion upon yours.[2] You see the strategist when he moves the pieces; his one thought is victory. Yet at play he puts off a little 8
of his kingly rigour, inciting all to good fellowship and the freedom of the game: I think he is afraid of being feared. Vexation in the man whom he beats delights him; he will never believe that his opponents have not let him win unless their annoyance proves him really victor. You would be surprised how often the pleasure born of these little happenings may favour the march of great affairs. Petitions that some wrecked influence

had left derelict come unexpectedly to port; I myself am gladly beaten by him when I have a favour to ask, since the loss of my game may mean the gaining of my
9 cause. About the ninth hour, the burden of government begins again. Back come the importunates, back the ushers to remove them; on all sides buzz the voices of petitioners, a sound which lasts till evening, and does not diminish till interrupted by the royal repast; even then they only disperse to attend their various patrons among the courtiers, and are astir till bedtime. Sometimes, though this is rare, supper is enlivened by sallies of mimes, but no guest is ever exposed to the wound of a biting tongue. Withal there is no noise of hydraulic organ,[1] or choir with its conductor intoning a set piece; you will hear no players of lyre or flute, no master of the music, no girls with cithara or tabor; the king cares for no strains but those which no less charm the mind with virtue than the ear
10 with melody. When he rises to withdraw, the treasury watch begins its vigil; armed sentries stand on guard during the first hours of slumber. But I am wandering from my subject. I never promised a whole chapter on the kingdom, but a few words about the king. I must stay my pen; you asked for nothing more than one or two facts about the person and the tastes of Theodoric; and my own aim was to write a letter, not a history. Farewell.

III

To his friend Filimatius

A. D. 467

INDICT me now by the laws against intrigue,[1] degrade 1
me from the Senate for keeping patient eyes on the promotion to which, after all, birth gives me claim, since my own sire and my wife's, my grandsire and his sire too before him were urban and praetorian prefects, or held high rank in court and army.[2] If 2
it comes to that, consider our friend Gaudentius, who but now of tribune's rank, towers in the dignity of the Vicariate above the unenterprising sloth of our good citizens.[3] Of course our young nobles grumble at his passing over their heads; as for him, his one sentiment is satisfaction. And they now respect a man scorned till yesterday; amazed at such a sudden rise, they look up to one as magistrate on whom as neighbour they looked down. He for his part sets his crier to stun the ears of his drowsy detractors; though envy goads them to hostility they always find a friendly bench reserved for them in court.[4] You too had best make 3
good the loss of your old office by the membership of the prefect's council now offered you; if you fail to do so, if you sit without the advantage which such a position confers, you will be set down as one only fit to represent a Vicarius. Farewell.

IV

To his friend Gaudentius

A. D. 467

1 CONGRATULATIONS, most honoured friend; the rods of office are yours by merit. To win your dignities you did not parade your mother's income, or the largess of your ancestors, your wife's jewels, or your paternal inheritance. In place of all this, it was your obvious sincerity, your proven zeal, your admitted social charm which won you favour in the imperial household.[1] O thrice and four times happy man, whose rise means joy to friends, gall to enemies, and glory to your own posterity, to say nothing of the example given to the active and alert, and the spur applied to the listless and the slow. The man who tries to emulate you, be his spirit what it will, may haply owe the last success to his own exertions, but will certainly owe his start
2 to your example. I fancy I see among the envious, with all deference to better citizens be it said, the old miserable arrogance, the old scorn of service affected by men too slack to serve, men lost to all ambition, who crown their cups with sophistries about the charm of a free life out of office, their motive a base indolence, and not the love of the ideal which they pretend. . . .

3 [Such a] taste the wisdom of our fathers rejected, for fear that boys might take advantage of it; they likened school orations to a textile fabric, and perfectly understood that, in the case of youthful eloquence, it is harder to spin out the terse than cut the exuberant short. So much for this subject; for the rest, remember that

if Providence approves my endeavours and brings me back safe and sound, I mean to repay your goodness with equal measure.

V

*To his friend Herenius**

A. D. 467

YOUR letter finds me at Rome. You are solicitous 1
to know whether the affairs which have brought me so far go forward as we hoped, what route I took, and how I fared on it, what rivers celebrated in song I saw, what towns famed for their fair sites, what mountains reputed as the haunt of gods, what glorious battlefields; for it is your delight to check the descriptions you have read by the more accurate relation of the eye-witness. I am rejoiced that you inquire about my doings, because I know that your interest springs from the heart. Well then, though little accidents there were, I will begin, under kind Providence, with things of good event; it was the wont of our ancestors, as you know, to develop even a tale of mishap from fortunate beginnings. As 2
bearer of the imperial letter,[1] I was able to avail myself of the public post on leaving our beloved Lyons †; my path lay amid the homes of kinsmen and acquaintances; and I lost less time from scarcity of horses than from multiplicity of friends, so closely did every one cling about me, shouting each against the other best wishes

* Paraphrased by Hodgkin, *Italy and her Invaders*, ii. 454; For the occasion of Sidonius' visit to Rome, see Introduction, p. xxvii.

† *Rhodanusiae nostrae.*

for a happy journey and safe return. In this way I drew near the Alps, which I ascended easily and without delay; formidable precipices rose on either side, but the snow was hollowed into a track, and the way
3 thus smoothed before me. Such rivers, too, as could not be crossed in boats, had convenient fords or traversable bridges with covered arches, built by the art of old time from the foundations to the stoned road above. On the Ticino I boarded the packet known as the *cursoria*, which soon bore me to the Po; be sure I laughed over those convivial songs of ours about Phaethon's sisters[1] and their unnatural tears of amber
4 gum. I passed the mouth of many a tributary from Ligurian or Euganean heights, sedgy Lambro, blue Adda, swift Adige, slow Mincio,[2] borne upon their very eddies as I looked; their margins and high banks were clothed with groves of oak and maple. Everywhere sweetly resounded the harmony of birds, whose loose-piled nests swayed on the hollow canes, or amid the pointed rushes and smooth reed-grass luxuriantly flourishing in the moisture of this wet
5 riverain soil. The way led past Cremona,[3] over whose proximity the Mantuan Tityrus so deeply sighed. We just touched at Brescello to take on Aemilian boatmen in place of our Venetian rowers, and, bearing to the right, soon reached Ravenna,[4] where one would find it hard to say whether Caesar's road, passing between the two, separates or unites the old town and the new port. The Po divides above the city, part flowing through, part round the place. It is diverted from its main bed by the State dykes, and is thence led in diminished volume through derivative channels, the two

halves so disposed that one encompasses and moats the walls, the other penetrates them and brings them trade —an admirable arrangement for commerce in general, 6
and that of provisions in particular. But the drawback is that, with water all about us, we could not quench our thirst; there was neither pure-flowing aqueduct nor filterable cistern, nor trickling source, nor unclouded well. On the one side, the salt tides assail the gates; on the other, the movement of vessels stirs the filthy sediment in the canals, or the sluggish flow is fouled by the bargemen's poles, piercing the bottom slime. From Ravenna we came to the Rubicon, which borrows 7
its name from the red colour of its gravels, and formed the frontier between the old Italians and the Cisalpine Gauls, when the two peoples divided the Adriatic towns. Thence I journeyed to Rimini and Fano, the first famed for its association with Caesar's rebellion, the second tainted by the fate of Hasdrubal [1]; for hard by flows Metaurus, more durably renowned through the fortune of a single day than if it had never ceased to run red to this hour, and roll down the dead on blood-stained waters to the Dalmatian Sea. After 8
this I just traversed the other towns of the Flaminian Way—in at one gate, out at the other—leaving the Picenians on the left and the Umbrians on the right; and here my exhausted system succumbed either to Calabrian Atabulus [2] or to air of the insalubrious Tuscan region, charged with poisonous exhalations, and blowing now hot, now cold. Fever and thirst ravaged the very marrow of my being; in vain I promised to their avidity draughts from pleasant fountain or hidden well, yes, and from every stream present or

to come, water of Velino clear as glass, of Clitunno ice-cold, cerulean of Teverone, sulphureous of Nera, pellucid of Farfa, muddy of Tiber;[1] I was mad to
9 drink, but prudence stayed the craving. Meanwhile, Rome herself spread wide before my view, but I felt like draining down her aqueducts, or even the water of her naval spectacles. Before I reached the city limits I fell prostrate at the triumphal threshold of the Apostles, and in a flash I felt the languor vanish from my enfeebled limbs.[2] After which proof of celestial protection, I alighted at the inn of which I have engaged a part, and there I am trying to get a little rest,
10 writing as I lie upon my couch. As yet I have not presented myself at the bustling gates of Emperor or Court official. For my arrival coincided with the marriage of the patrician Ricimer, to whom the hand of the Emperor's daughter was being accorded in the hope of securer times for the State.[3] Not individuals alone, but whole classes and parties are given up to rejoicing; you have the best of it on your side of the Alps. While I was writing these lines, scarce a theatre, provision-market, praetorium, forum, temple, or gymnasium but echoed to the passage of the cry *Thalassio!*[4] and even at this hour the schools are closed, no business is doing, the Courts are voiceless, missions are postponed; there is a truce to intrigue, and all the serious business of life seems merged in the buffooneries of the stage.
11 Though the bride has been given away, though the bridegroom has put off his wreath, the consular his palm-broidered robe, the brideswoman her wedding gown, the distinguished senator his toga, and the plain man his cloak, yet the noise of the great gathering has

not died away in the palace chambers, because the bride still delays to start for her husband's house. When this merrymaking has run out its course, you shall hear what remains to tell of my proceedings, if indeed these crowded hours of idleness to which the whole State seems now surrendered are ever to end, even when the festivities are over. Farewell.

VI

*To his friend Eutropius**

A. D. 467

I HAVE long wished to write, but feel the impulse 1
more than ever now, when by the Christ's preventing grace, I am actually on the way to Rome. My sole motive, or at least my chief one, is to drag you from the slough of your domestic ease by an appeal to you to enter the imperial service.[1] . . .

Moreover, by the goodness of God, your age, your 2
health of body and mind concur to fit you for the task; you have horses, arms, wardrobe, establishment, slaves in plenty; the one thing lacking, unless I greatly err, is the courage to begin. In your own home you are energetic enough; it is only at the idea of exile from it that a dull despondency intimidates you. How can it fairly be described as exile, for one with blood of senators in his veins and with the effigies of ancestors in the trabea daily forced upon his sight, to visit Rome once in his prime—Rome the abode of law, the training-

* Partly translated by Chaix, p. 264. For the effect of the letter on Eutropius, see III. vi.

school of letters, the fount of honours, the head of the world, the motherland of freedom, the city unique upon earth, where none but the barbarian and the slave is foreign?[1]

3 Shame on you now if you bury yourself among cow-keeping rustics, or grunting swineherds, as if it were the height of your felicity to feel the plough-handle tremble above the cleft furrow, or, bowed over your scythe, to spoil the meadow of its flowery wealth, or hoe the luxuriant vines with a face bent earthwards. Have done! awake! sleek ease has unstrung the sinews of your mind; raise it to higher things. Is it a less duty in a man of your descent to cultivate himself
4 than his estate? In fine, what you are pleased to call a young man's exercise is really a relaxation only fit for broken soldiers, when their feeble hands exchange rusty sword for belated mattock. Suppose you achieve your end; suppose that vineyard upon vineyard foams with purple juice, while piled granaries collapse under endless mounds of grain; suppose plump neatherds drive the crowding cows with their swollen udders into the reeking yards to milk: what then? What use will it be to have enlarged your patrimony by sordid gains like these, to have lived recluse not only among such things, but, O deeper shame! for such things' sake? You will have only yourself to thank if one day you stand, you a nobleman born, obscure in your white hairs behind your juniors seated in debate, if you smart under the speech of some poor man risen to honour by office, and with anguish see yourself distanced by those in whom it would once have been presumption to follow
5 in our train. But why say more? Take my appeal

as it is meant, and you shall find me at your side ready to anticipate and share your every effort.[1] But if you let yourself be caught in the insidious nets of pleasure; if you choose to yoke yourself, as the saying is, with the tenets of Epicurus, who frankly sacrifices virtue, and defines the chief good as physical delight, then, be our posterity my witness, I wash my hands of the disgrace. Farewell.

VII

To his friend Vincentius

A. D. 468

THE case of Arvandus[2] distresses me, nor do 1
I conceal my distress, for it is our emperor's crowning praise that a condemned prisoner may have friends who need not hide their friendship. I was more intimate with this man than it was safe to be with one so light and so unstable, witness the odium lately kindled against me on his account, the flame of which has scorched me for this lapse from prudence. But since I had 2
given my friendship, honour bound me fast, though he on his side has no steadfastness at all; I say this because it is the truth and not to strike him when he is down. For he despised friendly advice and made himself throughout the sport of fortune; the marvel to me is, not that he fell at last, but that he ever stood so long. How often he would boast of weathering adversity, when we, with a less superficial sense of things, deplored the sure disaster of his rashness, unable to call happy any man who only sometimes and

3 not always deserves the name. But now for your question as to his government; I will tell you in few words, and with all the loyalty due to a friend however far brought low. During his first term as prefect his rule was very popular; the second was disastrous. Crushed by debt, and living in dread of creditors, he was jealous of the nobles from among whom his successor must needs be chosen. He would make fun of all his visitors, profess astonishment at advice, and spurn good offices; if people called on him too rarely, he showed suspicion; if too regularly, contempt. At last the general hate encompassed him like a rampart; before he was well divested of his authority, he was invested with guards, and a prisoner bound for Rome. Hardly had he set foot in the city when he was all exultation over his fair passage along the stormy Tuscan coast, as if convinced that the very elements
4 were somehow at his bidding. At the Capitol, the Count of the Imperial Largess,[1] his friend Flavius Asellus, acted as his host and jailer, showing him deference for his prefectship, which seemed, as it were, yet warm, so newly was it stripped from him. Meanwhile, the three envoys from Gaul arrived upon his heels with the provincial decrees[2] empowering them to impeach in the public name. They were Tonantius Ferreolus,[3] the ex-prefect, and grandson, on the mother's side, of the Consul Afranius Syagrius, Thaumastus, and Petronius, all men practised in affairs and eloquent, all conspicuous ornaments of our country.
5 They brought, with other matters entrusted to them by the province, an intercepted letter, which Arvandus' secretary, now also under arrest, declared to have been

dictated by his master. It was evidently addressed to the King of the Goths,* whom it dissuaded from concluding peace with 'the Greek Emperor',† urging that instead he should attack the Bretons north of the Loire, and asserting that the law of nations called for a division of Gaul between Visigoth and Burgundian. There was more in the same mad vein, calculated to inflame a choleric king, or shame a quiet one into action. Of course the lawyers found here a flagrant case of treason. These tactics did not escape the 6
excellent Auxanius and myself; in whatever way we might have incurred the impeached man's friendship, we both felt that to evade the consequences at this crisis of his fate would be to brand us as traitors, barbarians, and poltroons. We at once exposed to the unsuspecting victim the whole scheme which a prosecution, no less astute than alert and ardent, intended to keep dark until the trial; their scheme was to noose in some unguarded reply an adversary rash enough to repudiate the advice of all his friends and rely wholly on his own unaided wits. We told him what to us and to more secret friends seemed the one safe course; we begged him not to give the slightest point away which they might try to extract from him on pretence of its insignificance; their dissimulation would be ruinous to him if it drew incautious admissions in answer to their questions. When 7
he grasped our point, he was beside himself; he suddenly broke out into abuse, and cried: 'Begone, you and your nonsensical fears, degenerate sons of prefectorian fathers; leave this part of the affair to

* Euric. † Anthemius.

me; it is beyond an intelligence like yours. Arvandus trusts in a clear conscience; the employment of advocates to defend him on the charge of bribery shall be his one concession.' We came away in low spirits, disturbed less by the insult to ourselves than by a real concern; what right has the doctor to take offence
8 when a man past cure gives way to passion? Meanwhile, our defendant goes off to parade the Capitol square, and in white raiment too; he finds sustenance in the sly greetings which he receives; he listens with a gratified air as the bubbles of flattery burst about him. He casts curious eyes on the gems and silks and precious fabrics of the dealers, inspects, picks up, unrolls, beats down the prices as if he were a likely purchaser, moaning and groaning the whole time over the laws, the age, the senate, the emperor, and all because they would not right him then and there without investiga-
9 tion. A few days passed, and, as I learned afterwards (I had left Rome in the interim), there was a full house in the senate-hall. Arvandus proceeded thither freshly groomed and barbered, while the accusers waited the decemvirs'[1] summons unkempt and in half-mourning, snatching from him thus the defendant's usual right, and securing the advantage of suggestion which the suppliant garb confers. The parties were admitted and, as the custom is, took up positions opposite each other. Before the proceedings began, all of prefectorian rank were allowed to sit; instantly Arvandus, with that unhappy impudence of his, rushed forward and forced himself almost into the very bosoms of the judges, while the ex-prefect* gained subsequent credit

* Tonantius Ferreolus.

and respect by placing himself quietly and modestly amidst his colleagues at the lowest end of the benches, to show that his quality of envoy was his first thought, and not his rank as senator. While this was going 10
on, absent members of the house came in; the parties stood up and the envoys set forth their charge. They first produced their mandate from the province, then the already-mentioned letter; this was being read sentence by sentence, when Arvandus admitted the authorship without even waiting to be asked. The envoys rejoined, rather cruelly, that the fact of his dictation was obvious.[1] And when the madman, blind to the depth of his fall, dealt himself a deadly blow by repeating the avowal not once, but twice, the accusers raised a shout, and the judges cried as one man that he stood convicted of treason out of his own mouth. Scores of legal precedents were on record to achieve his ruin. Only at this point, and then not at once, is 11
the wretched man said to have turned white in tardy repentance of his loquacity, recognizing all too late that it is possible to be convicted of high treason for other offences than aspiring to the purple. He was stripped on the spot of all the privileges pertaining to his prefecture, an office which by re-election he had held five years, and consigned to the common jail as one not now first degraded to plebeian rank, but restored to it as his own. Eye-witnesses report, as the most pathetic feature of all, that as a result of his intrusion upon his judges in all that bravery and smartness while his accusers dressed in black, his pitiable plight won him no pity when he was led off to prison a little later. How, indeed, could any one be much moved at his

fate, seeing him haled to the quarries or hard labour
12 still all trimmed and pomaded like a fop? Judgement was deferred a bare fortnight. He was then condemned to death, and flung into the island of the Serpent of Epidaurus.[1] There, an object of compassion even to his enemies, his elegance gone, spewed, as it were, by Fortune out of the land of the living, he now drags out by benefit of Tiberius'[2] law his respite of thirty days after sentence, shuddering through the long hours at the thought of hook and Gemonian stairs, and the
13 noose of the brutal executioner. We, of course, whether in Rome or out of it, are doing all we can; we make daily vows, we redouble prayers and supplications that the imperial clemency may suspend the stroke of the drawn sword, and rather visit a man already half dead with confiscation of property, and exile. But whether Arvandus has only to expect the worst, or must actually undergo it, he is surely the most miserable soul alive if, branded with such marks of shame, he has any other desire than to die. Farewell.

VIII

*To his friend Candidianus**

A. D. 468

1 You congratulate me on my prolonged stay at Rome, though I note the touch of irony, and your wit at my expense. You say you are glad your old friend has at last seen the sun, since on the Saône his chances of

* Partly translated by Hodgkin, i. 860, and by Chaix, i. 273. Cf. Letter V.

a good look at it are few and far between. You abuse my misty Lyons,[1] and deplore the days so cloaked by morning fog that the full heat of noon can scarcely unveil them. Now does this nonsense fitly come from 2
a native of that oven of a town Cesena? You have shown your real opinion of your charming and convenient natal soil by leaving it. The midges of Po may pierce your ears; the city frogs may croak and swarm on every side, but you know very well that you are better off in exile at Ravenna than at home. In that marsh of yours the laws of everything are always the wrong way about; the waters stand and the walls fall, the towers float and the ships stick fast, the sick man walks and the doctor lies abed, the baths are chill and the houses blaze, the dead swim and the quick are dry, the powers are asleep and the thieves wide awake, the clergy live by usury and the Syrian chants the Psalms, business men turn soldiers and soldiers business men, old fellows play ball and young fellows hazard, eunuchs take to arms and rough allies to letters.[2] And that is the kind of city you choose 3
to settle in, a place that may boast a territory but little solid ground. Be kinder, therefore, to Transalpines who never provoked you; their climate wins too cheap a triumph if it shines only by comparison with such as yours. Farewell.

IX

To his friend Herenius

A. D. 468

THE patrician Ricimer well married, and the wealth 1
of both empires blown to the winds in the process, the

community has at last resumed its sober senses and opened door and field again to business. Even before this happened I had already been made welcome to the home of the prefectorian Paul, and enjoyed the friendliest and most hospitable treatment in a house no less respectable for piety than learning. I do not know the man more eminent in every kind of accomplishment than my host. I am amazed when I think of the subtleties which he propounds, the figures of rhetoric adorning his judgements, the polish of his verses, the wonders which his fingers can perform. And over and above this encyclopaedic knowledge, he has a still better possession, a conscience superior even to all this science. Naturally, my first inquiries as to possible avenues to court-favour were addressed to him; with him I discuss the likeliest patrons for the advancement
2 of our hopes. There is, however, little need to hesitate; the number of those whose influence merits our consideration is so small. There are, indeed, many senators of wealth and birth, ripe in experience, helpful in counsel, all of the highest rank, and equal in real consideration. But without disparagement to others, we found two consulars, Gennadius Avienus and Caecina Basilius, in enjoyment of a peculiar eminence, and conspicuous above the rest; if you leave out of the account the great military officers, these two members of the exalted order easily come next to the emperor himself. We found them both deserving of the highest admiration; but their characters were very different; what resemblance there was rested rather on inborn than acquired qualities. Let me give you a short
3 description of the pair. Avienus reached the consulate

by luck, Basilius by merit. It was observed that the former attained his dignities with enviable rapidity, but that although the latter was slower, he won the greater number of distinctions in the end. If either chanced to leave his house, a whole populace of clients was afoot to escort him, and pressed about him like a human tide. But though the two were in so far on a level, the spirits and expectations of their friends were very far from equal. Avienus would do all that in him lay for the advancement of his sons, or sons-in-law, or brothers, but was so absorbed in family candidates that his energy in the interest of outside aspirants was proportionately impaired. There was a further reason 4 for preferring the Decian to the Corvinian family. What Avienus could only obtain for his own connexions while in office, Basilius obtained for strangers while he was in a private station. Avienus opened his mind freely, and at once, but little came of it; Basilius rarely and not for some time, but to the petitioner's advantage. Neither of the two was inaccessible or costly of approach; but in the one case cultivation reaped mere affability, in the other, solid gain. After long balancing of alternatives, we finally 5 compromised in this sense; we would preserve all due respect for the older consular, whose house we were duly frequenting, but devote our real attention to the habitués of Basilius' house. Now while, with the assistance of this right honourable friend, I was considering how best to advance the matter of our Arvernian petition,[1] the Kalends of January came round, on which day the emperor's name was to be enrolled in the Fasti as consul for a second year. 'The very thing,' cried my 6

patron. 'My dear Sollius, I well know that you are engaged in an exacting duty, but I do wish you would bring out your Muse again in honour of the new consul; let her sing something appropriate to the occasion, in whatever haste composed. I will obtain you an audience, be there to encourage you before you begin to recite, and guarantee you a good reception when you have done. I have some experience in these matters; trust me when I say that serious advantage may accrue from this little scheme.' I took the hint; he did not withdraw from the suggested plan, but gave me the support of an invincible ally in the act of homage imposed upon me, and managed so to influence my new consul, that I was incontinently
7 named president of his senate. But I expect you are tired to death of this prolix letter, and would much rather peruse my little work[1] itself at your leisure. Indeed, I am sure you would, so the eloquent pages bear you the verses herewith, and must do duty for me until I come to speak for myself a few days hence. If my lines win the suffrage of your critical judgement, I shall be just as delighted as if a speech of mine in the assembly or from the rostra called forth the 'bravos' not of senators alone but of all the citizens. I warn you, nay, I insist with you, not to think of setting this slight piece of mine on the same plane as the hexameters of your own Muse, for by the side of yours my lines will suggest the triviality of epitaph-mongers rather than
8 the grandeur of heroic verse. Rejoice, all the same, with the panegyrist; he cannot claim the credit of a fine performance, but at least he has the reward of one. And so, if gay may enliven grave, I will imitate

the Pyrgopolinices of Plautus, and conclude in a robustious and Thrasonical vein.[1] And since, by Christ's aid, I have got the prefecture by a lucky pen, I bid you treat me as my new state demands; pile up all conceivable felicitations and exalt to the stars my eloquence or my luck, according as I please, or fail to please, your judgement. I can imagine your smile when you see your friend carrying it off in this style with the braggart airs of the old stage-soldier. Farewell.

X

To his friend Campanianus

A. D. 468

THE Intendant of Supplies[2] has personally presented 1
the letter in which you commend him as your old friend to my new judgement. I am greatly indebted to him, but most of all to yourself for this evidence of your resolve to assume my friendship certain and proof against all suspicion. I welcome, I eagerly embrace this opportunity of acquaintance, and of intimacy, since my desire to oblige you cannot but draw closer the bonds which already unite us. But please commend 2
me in my turn to his vigilant care, commend, that is, my cause and my repute. For I rather fear that there may be an uproar in the theatres if the supplies of grain run short, and that the hunger of all the Romans will be laid to my account. I am on the point of dispatching him immediately to the harbour in person, because news is to hand that five ships from Brindisi have put in at Ostia laden with wheat and honey.

A stroke of energy on his part, and we should have these cargoes ready in no time for the expectant crowds; he would win my favour, I the people's, and he and I together yours. Farewell.

XI

To his friend Montius

ABOUT A. D. 461–7

1 On the eve of your departure to visit your people of Franche-Comté, most eloquent of friends, you ask me for a copy of a certain satire, assuming it really of my composition. I must say the request surprises me; it is not nice to jump to a false conclusion about a friend's conduct in this manner. It is so likely—is it not?—that at my then age and with my total lack of leisure, I should devote my energies to a kind of literature which it would have been presumptuous in a young man doing his service to compose, and assuredly perilous to publish. Why, a mere nodding acquaintance with a grammarian would suffice to recall the advice of the Calabrian:

'Against the libellous poet, is there not remedy of law and sentence?'[1]

2 To prevent any more credulity of this sort as regards your old friend, I will set forth at some length, and from the beginning, the events which brought on my head the sound and smoke of public odium. In the reign of Majorian, an anonymous but very mordant satire in verse was circulated at court; gross in its invective, it took advantage of unprotected names,

though it lashed vice, its attack was above all personal.[1] The inhabitants of Arles (that city was the scene of these events) were much excited; they wanted to know on which of our poets the weight of public indignation was to fall; at their head were the men whom the invisible author had most visibly branded. It 3 chanced that the illustrious Catullinus arrived at this juncture from Clermont; always a close friend of mine, he was then nearer to me than ever, as we had just served together; a common duty away from home brings (you know how) fellow citizens nearer. Well, Paeonius and Bigerrus set a trap for the unsuspecting visitor: they took him off his guard, and asked him, before numerous witnesses, whether he was familiar with the new poem. 'Let me hear some of it,' said Catullinus. But when they went on jestingly to quote various passages from the satire, he burst out laughing, and asseverated, rather inopportunely, perhaps, that such verses deserved to be immortalized, and set up in letters of gold on the rostra or the Capitol.[2] At this Paeonius 4 flamed out, for he was the man whom the fiery tooth of the satirist had most sharply bitten. 'Ha!' he cried to the crowd attracted to the spot, 'I have found out the author of this public outrage. Just look at Catullinus half dead with laughter there; obviously he knew all the points beforehand. How could he thus anticipate, and conclude from a mere part, unless he were already acquainted with the whole? We know that Sidonius is in Auvergne. It is easy to infer that he wrote the thing and that Catullinus was the first to hear it from his lips.' Now I was not only absent, but ignorant and innocent as a babe; that did not prevent a tempest of fury and

abuse against me; they cast to the winds loyalty, fair
5 play, and fair inquiry; such power had this popular favourite to draw the fickle crowd whither he would. As you know, Paeonius was a demagogue well versed in the tribune's art of troubling the waters of faction. But if you asked 'whence his descent and where his home?'[1] 'tis known he was nothing more than a plain citizen, whom the eminence of his stepfather more than any distinction of his own house first brought to public notice. He was bent on rising, and more than once let it be seen that he would stick at nothing to attain his end; though mean by nature he would spend freely for his own advancement. For example, when the engagement of his daughter (against whom I would not breathe a word) brought him the alliance of a family above his own, our Chremes,[2] if rumour does not lie, announced to his Pamphilus a dower magnificently beyond the
6 strict civic standard. Again, when the Marcellian conspiracy[3] to seize the diadem was brewing, what did our friend do? A *novus homo*, and in his grey hairs, he must needs constitute himself the leader of the young nobility until in the fullness of time the efforts of a lucky audacity were rewarded, for the interregnum, like a rift in clouds, threw a flash of splendour on the obscurity of his birth. The throne was vacant, the State in confusion; but he, and only he, had the face, without waiting for credentials, to assume the fasces as prefect in Gaul, and for months together climb, in the sight of gods and men, the tribunal distinguished by so many illustrious magistrates. Like a public accountant or advocate promoted to honours at the close of a professional career, he

just managed to get recognition at the very end of his official term. A prefect and senator in such wise that 7
only my respect for the character of his son-in-law prevents me from exposing him as utterly as he deserves, behold him unashamed to fan the odium of good and bad alike against one still nominally his friend, as if I were the only man of my epoch competent to string a verse or two together. I came to Arles suspecting nothing —how should I?—though my enemies were good enough to believe I dared not venture. The next day I paid my duty to the emperor, and went down to the forum, as I always do. As soon as I appeared, the conspiracy was at once confounded, being of the sort which, as Lucan says,[1] dares put nothing to the touch. Some fell cringing at my knees, abasing themselves beyond propriety; others hid behind statues or columns to avoid the necessity of salutation; others, again, with looks of affected sorrow, walked closely at my sides. I was 8
wondering all the time what might be the meaning of this excess, first in insolence and now in abasement, but was determined not to ask, when one of the gang, put up, no doubt, to play the part, came forward to exchange greeting. We talked, and incidentally he remarked: 'You see these people?' 'I do indeed,' I answered, 'and I may say that their proceedings astonish me as much as they impress me little.' To which my kind interpreter rejoined: 'It is in your quality of satirist that they show this fear or detestation of you.' 'How so,' I cried, 'on what grounds? when did I give them the excuse? who detected the offence? who brought the charge and who the proof?' Then, with a smile, I continued thus: 'My dear sir, if you

don't mind, oblige me by asking these excited persons from me, whether it was a professed informer or spy who got up this imaginative story about my writing a satire. If they have to make the inevitable apology later, it will be better for them to give up this outrageous
9 behaviour at once.' No sooner had he conveyed the message, than they all came to offer their hands and salutations, not man by man, and with decorum, but the whole herd with a rush. Our Curio was left all alone to breathe imprecations on the base deserters, until at fall of evening he was hurried off home on the
10 shoulders of bearers gloomier than mutes. The next day the emperor commanded my presence at the banquet he was giving on the occasion of the Games. At the left end of the couch[1] was Severinus, the consul of the year, who managed to trim his sails to a wind of even favour throughout our vast dynastic changes and all the uneven fortunes of the State. Next him was the ex-prefect Magnus, who had just laid down the consul's office, and by virtue of these two dignities was no unworthy neighbour. Beyond Magnus was his nephew Camillus, who had also held two offices, and by his conduct of them added equal lustre to his father's proconsular rank and his uncle's consulship. Next to him was Paeonius, and then Athenius, a man versed in every turn of controversy and vicissitude of the times. After them came Gratianensis, a character not to be mentioned in the same breath with evil; and though lower in rank than Severinus, above him in the imperial estimation. I was last, upon the left side of the emperor, who lay at the right extremity of the table.
11 When the dinner was well advanced, the prince

addressed a few short remarks to the consul. He then turned to the ex-consul, with whom he talked several times, the subjects being literary. At an early opportunity he addressed himself to Camillus, with the remark: 'My dear Camillus, you have so admirable an uncle that I pride myself on having conferred a consulship on your family.' Camillus, who coveted a like promotion, saw his chance, and replied: 'A consulship, Sire! you surely mean a *first*?' Even the emperor's presence did not check the loud applause which greeted this rejoinder. By accident, or of set 12
purpose, I cannot say which, the prince now passed over Paeonius, and addressed some question or other to Athenius. Paeonius had the bad manners to take the oversight ill, and made matters worse by answering before the other had time to speak. The emperor only laughed; it was his way to be very genial in society so long as his own dignity was observed. To Athenius the laugh came as compensation for the slight he had suffered. That craftiest of all the elders had been boiling with suppressed resentment all the time because Paeonius had been placed above him, but he calmed himself enough to say: 'It no longer surprises me, Sire, that he should try to push himself into my place, when he has now pushed into your Majesty's conversation.' The illustrious Gratia- 13
nensis here remarked that the episode opened a wide field to a satirist. On this, the emperor turned round to me and said: 'It is news to me, Count Sidonius,[1] that you are a writer of satires.' 'Sire,' I answered, 'it is news to me too.' 'Anyhow,' he replied with a laugh, 'I beg you to be merciful to me.' 'I shall

spare myself also,' I rejoined, 'by refraining from illegality.' Thereupon the emperor said: 'What shall we do, then, to the people who have provoked you?' 'This, Sire,' I answered. 'Whoever my accuser be, let him come out into the open. If I am proved guilty, let me abide the penalty. But if, as will probably be the case, I rebut the charge, I ask of your clemency permission to write anything I choose about my
14 assailant, provided I observe the law.' The emperor looked at Paeonius, who was hesitating, and made a sign of inquiry whether he accepted the conditions. But he had not a word to answer, and the prince spared his embarrassment; at last, however, he managed to say: 'I agree to your conditions, if you can put them in verse on the spot.' 'Very well,' I said; and turning back, as if to call for water for my hands, I remained in that attitude the time occupied by a quick servant in going round the table. I then resumed my former position, and the emperor said: 'Your undertaking was to ask in an impromptu our sanction for writing satire.' I replied:

'O mightiest prince, I pray that this be thy decree: let him who calls me libeller or prove his charge, or fear.'

15 I do not want to seem conceited, but the applause which followed was equal to that which had greeted Camillus; though it was earned, of course, less by the merit of the verse than by the speed with which I had composed. Then the emperor cried: 'I call God and the common weal to witness that in future I give you licence to write what you please; the charge brought against you was not susceptible of proof. It would be most unjust if the imperial decision allowed such latitude to private quarrels that evident malice might imperil

by obscure charges nobles whom conscious innocence puts wholly off their guard.' At this pronouncement I modestly bent my head and thanked him; the face of my opponent, which had previously shown successive signs of rage and vexation, now grew pale. Indeed, it was almost frozen with terror, as if he had received the order to present his neck to the executioner's drawn sword. Little more was said before we rose from the 16
table. We had withdrawn a short distance from the imperial presence, and were in the act of putting on our mantles, when the consul fell upon my bosom, the ex-prefects seized my hands, and my guilty friend abased himself so often and so profoundly, that he aroused universal pity, and bade fair to place me in a more invidious position by his entreaties than he had ever done by his insinuations. Urged to speak by the throng of nobles round me, I closed the episode by telling him that he might set his mind at rest; I should write no satire on his base intrigue so long as he abstained henceforward from the misrepresentation of my actions. It should be punishment enough for him to know that his ascription of the lampoon to me had added to my credit and brought nothing but discredit on himself. In fine, 17
honoured lord, the man whom I thus confounded had not been loudest in calumny; he was a mere whisperer. But since, by his offence, I had the satisfaction of being so warmly greeted by so many men of the highest influence and position, I confess that it was almost worth while to have borne the scandal of the exordium for the sake of so triumphant a conclusion. Farewell.

BOOK II

I

*To [his brother-in-law] Ecdicius**

c. A.D. 470

1 YOUR countrymen of Auvergne suffer equally from two evils. 'What are those?' you ask. Seronatus' presence, and your own absence. Seronatus—his very name first calls for notice;[1] I think that when he was so named, a prescient fortune must have played with contradictions, as our predecessors did, who by antiphrasis used the root of 'beautiful' in their word for war, the most hideous thing on earth; and, with no less perversity, the root of mercy in their name for Fate, because Fate never spares. This Catiline of our day is just returned from the region of the Adour to blend in whole confusion the fortune and the blood of unhappy victims which down there he had only pledged
2 himself in part to shed. You must know that his long-dissembled savagery comes daily further into the light. His spite affronts the day; his dissimulation was abject as his arrogance is servile. He commands like a despot; no tyrant more exacting than he, no judge more peremptory in sentence, no barbarian falser in false witness. The livelong day he goes armed from cowardice, and starving from pure meanness. Greed makes him

* Partly translated by Fertig, Part i, p. 20.

formidable, and vanity cruel; he continually commits himself the very thefts he punishes in others. To the universal amusement he will rant of war in a civilian company, and of literature among Goths. Though he barely knows the alphabet, he has the conceit to dictate letters in public and the impudence to revise them under the same conditions.

All property he covets he makes a show of buying; 3
but he never thinks of paying, nor does he trouble to furnish himself with deeds, knowing it hopeless to prove a title.[1] In the council-chamber he commands, but in counsel he is mute. He jests in church and preaches at table; snores on the bench, and breathes condemnation in his bedroom. His actions are filling the woods with dangerous fugitives from the estates, the churches with scoundrels, the prisons with holy men. He cries the Goths up and the Romans down; he prepares illusions for prefects and collusions with public accountants. He tramples under foot the Theodosian Code to set in its place the laws of a Theodoric,[2] raking up old charges to justify new imposts. Be quick, then, to unravel the tangle of affairs that 4
makes you linger; cut short whatever causes your delay. Our people are at the last gasp; freedom is almost dead. Whether there is any hope, or whether all is to be despair, they want you in their midst to lead them. If the State is powerless to succour, if, as rumour says, the Emperor Anthemius is without resource, our nobility is determined to follow your lead, and give up their country or the hair of their heads.[3] Farewell.

II

To his friend Domitius

A.D. 461–7 (?)

1 You attack me for staying in the country; I might with greater reason complain of you for lingering in town. Spring already gives place to summer; the sun has travelled his full range to the Tropic of Cancer and now advances on his journey towards the pole. Why should I waste words upon the climate which we here enjoy? The Creator has so placed us that we are exposed to the afternoon heats. Enough said; the whole world glows; the snow is melting on the Alps; the earth is seamed with gaping heat-cracks. The fords are nothing but dry gravel, the banks hard mud, the plains dust; the running streams languish and hardly drag themselves along; as for the water,
2 hot is not the word; it boils. We are all perspiring in light silks or linens; but there you stay at Ameria all swathed up under your great gown, buried in a deep chair, and setting with many yawns 'My mother was a Samian'[1] to pupils paler from the heat than from any fear of you. As you love your health, get away at once from your suffocating alleys, join our household as the most welcome of all guests, and in this most temperate of retreats evade the intemperate dog-star.

3 You may like to know the kind of place to which you are invited. We are at the estate known as Avitacum,[2] a name of sweeter sound in my ears than my own patrimony because it came to me with my

wife. Infer the harmony which established between me and mine; it is God's ordinance; but you might be pardoned for fearing it the work of some enchantment.

On the west rises a big hill, pretty steep but not rocky, from which issue two lower spurs, like branches from a double trunk, extending over an area of about four jugera. But while the ground opens out enough to form a broad approach to the front door, the straight slopes on either side lead a valley right to the boundary of the villa, which faces north and south. On the south-west are the baths,[1] which so 4
closely adjoin a wooded eminence that if timber is cut on the hill above, the piles of logs slide down almost by their own weight, and are brought up against the very mouth of the furnace. At this point is the hot bath, which corresponds in size with the adjoining *unguentarium*, except that it has an apse with a semi-circular basin; here the hot water pressing through the sinuous lead pipes that pierce the wall issues with a sobbing sound. The chamber itself is well heated from beneath; it is full of day, and so overflowing with light that very modest bathers seem to themselves something more than naked. Next come the spacious 5
frigidarium, which may fairly challenge comparison with those in public baths. The roof is pyramidal, and the spaces between the converging ridges are covered with imbricated tiles; the architect has inserted two opposite windows about the junction of walls and dome, so that if you look up, you see the fine coffering displayed to the best advantage. The interior walls are unpretentiously covered with plain white stucco, and the apartment is designed by the nicest calculation of space

to contain the same number of persons as the semi-
circular bath holds bathers, while it yet allows the
servants to move about without impeding one another.
6 No frescoed scene obtrudes its comely nudities, gracing
the art to the disgrace of the artist. You will observe
no painted actors in absurd masks, and costumes rival-
ling Philistio's gear with colours gaudy as the rainbow.[1]
You will find no pugilists or wrestlers intertwining their
oiled limbs in those grips which, in real bouts, the
gymnasiarch's chaste wand unlocks the moment
7 the enlaced limbs look indecent. Enough you will see
upon these walls none of those things which it is nicer
not to look upon. A few verses there are, harmless
lines enough, since no one either regrets perusal or
cares to peruse again. If you want to know what
marbles are employed, neither Paros nor Carystos, nor
Proconnesos, nor Phrygia, nor Numidia, nor Sparta
have contributed their diverse inlays. I had no use for
stone that simulates a broken surface, with Ethiopic
crags and purple precipices stained with genuine murex.
Though enriched by no cold splendour of foreign
marble, my poor huts and hovels do not lack the cool-
ness to which a plain citizen may aspire. But now
I had really better talk about the things I have, than
8 the things I lack. With this hall is connected on the
eastern side an annexe, a piscina, or, if you prefer the
Greek word, baptistery, with a capacity of about twenty
thousand modii. Into this the bathers pass from the
hot room by three arched entrances in the dividing
wall. The supports are not piers but columns, which
your experienced architect calls the glory of buildings.
Into this piscina, then, a stream lured from the brow

of the hill is conducted in channels curving round the outside of the swimming basin; it issues through six pipes terminating in lions' heads which, to one entering rapidly, seem to present real fangs, authentic fury of eyes, indubitable manes. When the master of the 9
house stands here with his household or his guests about him, people have to shout in each other's ears, or the noise of falling water makes their words inaudible; the interference of this alien sound forces conversations which are quite public to assume an amusing air of secrecy. On leaving this chamber you see in front of you the withdrawing-room; adjoining it is the store-room, separated only by a movable partition from the place where the maids do our weaving.

On the east side a portico commands the lake, sup- 10
ported by simple wooden pillars instead of pretentious monumental columns. On the side of the front entrance is a long covered space unbroken by interior divisions; it may be incorrect to call this a hypodrome, but I may fairly award it the name of cryptoporticus. At the end it is curtailed by a section cut off to form a delightfully cool bay, and here when we keep open festival, the whole chattering chorus of nurses and dependants sounds a halt when the family retires for the siesta.

The winter dining-room is entered from this crypto- 11
porticus; a roaring fire on an arched hearth often fills this apartment with smoke and smuts. But that detail I may spare you; a glowing hearth is the last thing I am inviting you to enjoy just now. I pass instead to things which suit the season and your present need. From here one enters a smaller chamber or dining-room,

all open to the lake and with almost the whole expanse of lake in its view. This chamber is furnished with a dining-couch and gleaming sideboard upon a raised area or dais to which you mount gradually, and not by abrupt or narrow steps from the portico below. Reclining at this table you can give the idle moments between the
12 courses to the enjoyment of the prospect. If water of our famous springs is served and quickly poured into the cups, one sees snowy spots and clouded patches form outside them ; the sudden chill dulls the fugitive reflections of the surface almost as if it had been greased. Such cups restrict one's draughts ; the thirstiest soul on earth, to say nothing of Your Abstemiousness, would set lip to the freezing brims with caution. From table you may watch the fisherman row his boat out to mid-lake, and spread his seine with cork floats, or suspend his lines at marked intervals to lure the greedy trout on their nightly excursions through the lake with bait of their own flesh and blood : what phrase more proper, since fish is literally caught
13 by fish ? The meal over, we pass into a withdrawing-room, which its coolness makes a perfect place in summer. Facing north, it receives all the daylight but no direct sun : a very small intervening chamber accommodates the drowsy servants, large enough to allow
14 them forty winks but not a regular sleep. It is delightful to sit here and listen to the shrill cicala at noon, the croak of frogs in the gloaming, the clangour of swans and geese in the earlier night or the crow of cocks in the dead of it, the ominous voice of rooks saluting the rosy face of Dawn in chorus, or, in the half-light, nightingales fluting in the bushes and

swallows twittering under the eaves. To this concert you may add the seven-stopped pipe of the pastoral Muse, on which the very wakeful Tityri of our hills will often vie one with another, while the herds about them low to the cow-bells as they graze along the pastures. All these tuneful songs and sounds will but charm you into deeper slumbers. If you leave the 15
colonnade and go down to the little lakeside harbour, you come to a greensward, and, hard by, to a grove of trees where every one is allowed to go. There stand two great limes, with roots and trunks apart, but the boughs interwoven in one continuous canopy. In their dense shade we play at ball[1] when my Ecdicius honours me with his company; but the moment the shadow of the trees shrinks to the area covered by the branches we stop for want of ground, and repose our tired limbs at dice.

I have described the house; I now owe you 16
a description of the lake. It extends in a devious course towards the east, and when violent winds lash it to fury, drenches the lower part of the house with spray. At its head the ground is marshy and full of bog-holes, impassable to the explorer; a slimy and saturated mud has formed there, and cold springs rise on all sides; the edges are fringed with weed. When the wind drops, small boats cleave its changeful surface in all directions. But if dirty weather comes up from the south the whole lake is swollen into monstrous waves and a rain of spray comes crashing over the tree-tops upon the banks. By nautical measure, it is seventeen stadia 17
in length. Where the river comes in, the broken water foams white against the rocky barriers; but the

stream soon wins clear of the overhanging crags, and is lost in the smooth expanse. Whether the river itself makes the lake, or is only an affluent, I know not; certain it is that it reaches the other end, and flows away through subterranean channels which only deprive it of its fish, and leave it intact in volume. The fish, driven into more sluggish waters, increase in size, red bodied and white under the belly. They cannot either return or escape; they fatten, and go self-contained as it were in
18 portable jails of their own composition. On the right, a wooded shore curves with an indented line; on the left, it opens to a level sweep of grass. On the south-west the shallows along the banks look green; over-arching boughs lend the water their own hue, and the water transmits it to the pebbles at the bottom; on the east, a similar fringe of foliage produces a like tint. On the north, the water preserves its natural colour; on the west, the shore is covered with a tangle of common growths crushed in many places where boats have rowed over them; close by, tufts of smooth reeds bend to the wind, and pulpy flat leaves of aquatic plants float upon the surface; the sweet waters nourish the bitter sap of
19 the grey-green willows growing near. In the deep middle of the lake is an islet, at one end of which projects a turning post upon boulders naturally piled, worn by contact with oar-blades during our aquatic sports; at this point competitors often collide and come to cheerful grief. Our fathers used to hold boat-races here in imitation of the Trojan ceremonial games at Drepanum.[1]

It is not in my bond to describe the estate itself; suffice it to say that it has spreading woods and flowery

meadows, pastures rich in cattle and a wealth of hardy shepherds. Here I must conclude. Were my pen to 20
run on much further the autumn would overtake you before you reached the end. Accord me, then, the grace of coming quickly; your return shall be as slow as ever you choose. And forgive me if, in my fear of overlooking anything about our situation here, I have given you facts in excess and beyond the fair limits of a letter. As it is, there are points which I have left untouched for fear of being tedious. But a reader of your judgement and imagination will not exaggerate the size of the descriptive page, but rather that of the house so spaciously depicted. Farewell.

III

To [his friend Magnus] Felix

c. A.D. 472

I REJOICE, honoured lord, to see you win the 1
distinction of this most exalted title;[1] and all the more because the news is announced to me by special messenger. For though you are now high among the powers, and after all these years the patrician dignity comes back to the Philagrian house by your felicity[2], you will discover, most loyal of friends, how much your honours grow by being shared, and how far so rare a modesty as yours exalts a lofty station. It was 2
for these qualities that the Roman people once preferred Quintus Fabius the Master of the Horse to Cursor with his dictatorial rigour and his Papirian pride;[3] for these that Pompey surpassed all rivals in a popularity

which he was too wise to scorn. By these Germanicus won the whole world's favour and forced Tiberius to repress his envy. For these reasons I will not concede all the credit for your promotion to the imperial pleasure. It has only one advantage over ours; were we to oppose your claims, it has the power to override us. Your peculiar privilege, your unique advantage is this: you have neither actual rival nor visible successor. Farewell.

IV

*To his friend Sagittarius**

A.D. 461–7

1 The honourable§ Projectus is ardently bent upon your friendship; I trust that you will not repel his advances. He is of noble lineage; the reputation of his father and his uncle, and his grandfather's eminence in the Church unite to lend a lustre to his name; he has indeed all that conduces to distinction; family, wealth, probity, energetic youth; but not till he is assured of your good graces, will he consider himself to have attained the culminating point of his career.
2 Although he has already asked and obtained from the widow of the late honourable Optantius her daughter's hand—may God speed his hopes—he fears that little will have been gained by all his vows, unless his own solicitude, or my intercession gains him your support as well. For you have taken the place of the girl's dead father; you have succeeded to his share in the

* Or to Syagrius, as C. § *Clarissimus.*

responsibility for her upbringing; it is to you that she looks for a father's love, a patron's guidance, a guardian's bounden care. And since it is but natural 3
that your admirable government of your household should attract men of the right stamp even from distant places, reward the modesty of this suppliant wooer by a kindly response. In the usual course of events it would have fallen to you to obtain him the mother's consent; as it is, he saves you this trouble, and you have only to sanction a troth already approved. Your reputation gives you in effect a parental authority in regard to this match; the father himself, if he had lived, could not have claimed a greater. Farewell.

V

To his friend Petronius

A.D. 461–7

JOHN, my friend, is caught inextricably in the 1
labyrinth of a complex business, and is at a loss what to hope and what abandon until your experienced eye, or another as good (if such there be), has looked into his titles to determine their validity. The case is confusing in that it has more than one side, and he does not see whether his statement should maintain one line of action or impugn another. I most earnestly beg you, 2
therefore, to examine his documents and tell him what his rights are, what he ought to allege or refute, and what his procedure should be. Let but the stream of this affair flow from the springs of your advice, and I have no fear that the other side will manage to reduce its volume by any unfair diversion. Farewell.

VI

To his friend Pegasius

A.D. 461–7

1 THERE is a proverb that delay is often best; I have just had proof that it is true. We have had your friend Menstruanus long enough among us, to find him worthy of a place among our dearest and most intimate friends. He is agreeable, and of refined manners, moderate, sensible, religious, and no spendthrift; his is a personality which confers as much as it obtains when admitted to the most approved of friend-
2 ships. I tell you this for my own satisfaction, and not to inform you of what you already know. As a result, content will now reign in three separate quarters. You will be pleased at this seal set on your judgement in the choice and adoption of your friends; the Arvenians will be pleased, since to my certain knowledge they liked him for the very qualities which, I am sure, commended him to you; lastly Menstruanus himself will be gratified at receiving the good opinion of honourable men. Farewell.

VII

To his friend Explicius

A.D. 461–7

1 YOU have given so many proofs of your impartiality that you have won universal respect, and for that reason I am always more than eager to send all seekers after justice to your judgement-seat; by so doing I ease

the disputants from their burden, and myself from all necessity of argument. These ends I shall attain in the present case, unless your diffidence should prompt you to refuse the parties audience; but your very inaccessibility is the best proof of your impartiality. For almost every one else intrigues to be chosen as an arbitrator, expecting to gain something in influence or advantage. Be indulgent, therefore, to men who 2
press on each other's heels to enjoy the privilege of pleading before so fair a judge; your repute is such that the loser can never be so stupid as to impugn your verdict, or the winner so over-subtle as to deride it. Both sides respect the truth; those against whom the verdict goes respect you; those whom it favours show their gratitude. Therefore I implore your early decision on the matter in dispute between Alethius and Paulus. I believe your sound sense and healthy judgement can alone heal the malady of this interminable quarrel, and that they will be far more effective than any decrees of decemvirs or of pontiffs. Farewell.

VIII

To his friend Desideratus

A.D. 461–7

I WRITE oppressed by a great sorrow. Three days 1
ago Filimatia died, and all business was suspended out of respect to her memory. She was an obedient wife, a kindly mistress, a capable mother, a dutiful daughter, whether at home or abroad, earning the willing service of her inferiors, the affection of her equals, and the

consideration of the great. Left an only daughter at her mother's death, she so bewitched her father by her charming ways, that though he was still a young man, he never longed for a male heir. And now her sudden death pierces two hearts, leaving a husband desolate and a father childless. The mother of five children has been snatched away before her time, her very fertility her worst misfortune[1]; had she been left, and the invalid father taken, the little ones would seem
2 less helpless than now. The tributes of affection which we pay the dead are not vain; it was not the sinister train of bearers who buried her; all present were dissolved in tears, and the very strangers hung upon the bier as if they would hold it back. They imprinted kisses on it, until more like one in slumber than one dead, she was received by her relatives and the clergy, to be laid to rest in her long home. When the rites were done, the bereaved father begged me to write an elegy for her tombstone; I did it while my tears were still almost warm, choosing the hendecasyllabic in place of the elegiac measure. If you do not think the lines too bad, my bookseller shall include them in the volumes of my selected poems; if you do, the heavy verse shall be confined to the heavy stone.

3 Here is my epitaph:

'In this tomb a mourning country's hands have laid the matron Filimatia, whom with fierce stroke and swift, fate snatched from spouse, from sire, from five orphaned children. O pride of thy house, O glory of thy consort, O wise and pure and seemly, O strict and tender, and worthy to precede even the aged, by what art of thy gentle nature didst thou unite the

qualities which seem at discord with each other? For a grave ease and a modesty not too severe for gaiety were ever the companions of thy life. Therefore we mourn thee taken, thy sixth lustre hardly run, and the due rites paid in this undue season of thy prime.'[1]

Whether you like the verses or not, hasten back to the city. You owe the bereaved homes of two fellow townsmen the duty of consolation. Pray God you so act that the manner of your action may never be your reproach hereafter. Farewell.

IX

*To his friend Donidius**

A.D. 461–7

To your question why, having got as far as Nîmes, I 1
I still leave your hospitality expectant, I reply by giving the reason for my delayed return. I will even dilate upon the causes of my dilatoriness, for I know that what I enjoy is your enjoyment too. The fact is, I have passed the most delightful time in the most beautiful country in the company of Tonantius Ferreolus and Apollinaris, the most charming hosts in the world. Their estates march together; their houses are not far apart; and the extent of intervening ground is just too far for a walk and just too short to make the ride worth while.[2] The hills above the houses are under vines and olives; they might be Nysa and Aracynthus, famed in song.[3] The view from one villa is over a wide flat country, that from the other over

* Translated by Hodgkin, ii. 324 f.

woodland; yet different though their situations are, the
2 eye derives equal pleasure from both. But enough of sites; I have now to unfold the order of my entertainment. Sharp scouts were posted to look out for our return; and not only were the roads patrolled by men from each estate, but even winding short-cuts and sheep-tracks were under observation, to make it quite impossible for us to elude the friendly ambush. Into this of course we fell, no unwilling prisoners; and our captors instantly made us swear to dismiss every idea of continuing our journey until a whole week had
3 elapsed. And so every morning began with a flattering rivalry between the two hosts, as to which of their kitchens should first smoke for the refreshment of their guest; nor, though I am personally related to one, and connected through my relatives with the other, could I manage by alternation to give them quite equal measure, since age and the dignity of prefectorian rank gave Ferreolus a prior right of invitation over and
4 above his other claims. From the first moment we were hurried from one pleasure to another. Hardly had we entered the vestibule of either house when we saw two opposed pairs of partners in the ball-game[1] repeating each other's movements as they turned in wheeling circles; in another place one heard the rattle of dice boxes and the shouts of the contending players; in yet another, were books in abundance ready to your hand; you might have imagined yourself among the shelves of some grammarian, or the tiers of the Athenaeum, or a bookseller's towering cases.[2] They were so arranged that the devotional works were near the ladies' seats; where the master sat were those

ennobled by the great style of Roman eloquence. The arrangement had this defect, that it separated certain books by certain authors in manner as near to each other as in matter they are far apart. Thus Augustine writes like Varro, and Horace like Prudentius; but you had to consult them on different sides of the room. Turranius Rufinus' interpretation of Adamantius Origen[1] 5
was eagerly examined by the readers of theology among us; according to our several points of view, we had different reasons to give for the censure of this Father by certain of the clergy as too trenchant a controversialist and best avoided by the prudent; but the translation is so literal and yet renders the spirit of the work so well, that neither Apuleius' version of Plato's *Phaedo*, nor Cicero's of the *Ctesiphon* of Demosthenes is more admirably adapted to the use and rule of our Latin tongue. While we were engaged 6
in these discussions as fancy prompted each, appears an envoy from the cook to warn us that the moment of bodily refreshment is at hand. And in fact the fifth hour had just elapsed, proving that the man was punctual, had properly marked the advance of the hours upon the water-clock[2]. The dinner was short, but abundant, served in the fashion affected in senatorial houses where inveterate usage prescribes numerous courses on very few dishes, though to afford variety, roast alternated with stew. Amusing and instructive anecdotes accompanied our potations; wit went with the one sort, and learning with the other. To be brief, we were entertained with decorum, refinement, and good cheer. After dinner, if we were at Voro- 7
cingus[3] (the name of one estate) we walked over to our

quarters and our own belongings. If at Prusianum, as the other is called, [the young] Tonantius and his brothers turned out of their beds for us because we could not be always dragging our gear about:[1] they are surely the elect among the nobles of our own age. The siesta over, we took a short ride to sharpen our jaded
8 appetites for supper. Both of our hosts had baths in their houses, but in neither did they happen to be available; so I set my own servants to work in the rare sober interludes which the convivial bowl, too often filled, allowed their sodden brains. I made them dig a pit at their best speed either near a spring or by the river; into this a heap of red-hot stones was thrown, and the glowing cavity then covered over with an arched roof of wattled hazel. This still left interstices, and to exclude the light and keep in the steam given off when water was thrown on the hot stones, we laid coverings
9 of Cilician goats' hair over all.[2] In these vapour-baths we passed whole hours with lively talk and repartee; all the time the cloud of hissing steam enveloping us induced the healthiest perspiration.

When we had perspired enough, we were bathed in hot water; the treatment removed the feeling of repletion, but left us languid; we therefore finished off with a bracing douche from fountain, well or river. For the river Gardon runs between the two properties; except in time of flood, when the stream is swollen and clouded with melted snow, it looks red through its tawny gravels, and flows still and pellucid over its pebbly bed,
10 teeming none the less with the most delicate fish. I could tell you of suppers fit for a king; it is not my sense of shame, but simply want of space which sets

a limit to my revelations. You would have a great story if I turned the page and continued on the other side; but I am always ashamed to disfigure the back of a letter with an inky pen. Besides, I am on the point of leaving here, and hope, by Christ's grace, that we shall meet very shortly; the story of our friends' banquets will be better told at my own table or yours—provided only that a good week's interval first elapses to restore me the healthy appetite I long for. There is nothing like thin living to give tone to a system disordered by excess. Farewell.

X

To his friend Hesperius

c. A. D. 470

WHAT I most love in you is your love of letters, and 1
I strive to enhance the generous devotion by the highest praises I can give; your firstfruits please the better for it, and even my own work begins to rise in my esteem. For the richest reward of a man's labours is to see promising young men growing up in that discipline of letters for which he in his own day smarted under the cane. The numbers of the indifferent grow at such a rate that unless your little band can save the purity of the Latin tongue from the rust of sorry barbarisms we shall soon have to mourn its abolition and decease. All the fine flowers of diction will lose their splendour through the apathy of our people. But 2
of that another time. My present duty is to send you what you asked, namely, any verses I might have written since we saw each other last, to compensate

you for my absence. I now satisfy your desire; young though you are, your judgement is already so matured that even we seniors like to obey your wishes.

A church has recently been built at Lyons,[1] and carried to a successful completion by the zeal of Bishop Patiens; you know his holy, strenuous, and ascetic life, how by his abounding liberality and hospitable love towards the poor he erects to an equal height the
3 temple of a spotless reputation. At his request I wrote a hurried inscription for the end of the church in triple trochaic, a metre by this time as familiar to you as it has long been to me. Hexameters by the illustrious poets Constantius and Secundinus adorn the walls by the altar; these mere shame forbids me to copy here for you. It is with diffidence that I let my verse appear at all; comparison of their accomplished work with the poor efforts of my leisure would be too overwhelming. Just as a too beautiful bridesmaid makes the worst escort for a bride, and a dark man looks his swarthiest in white, so does my scrannel pipe sound common and is drowned by the music of their nobler instruments. Holding the middle post in space and the last in merit, my composition stands condemned as a poor thing, no less for its faulty art than for the presumption which has set it where it is. Their inscriptions properly outshine mine, which is but a sketchy and fanciful production. But excuses are of little use: let the wretched reed warble the lines demanded of me:

4 'O thou * who here applaudest the labours of Patiens our pontiff and father, be it thine to receive of heaven

* Translated by Hodgkin, ii. 328 ff., who uses a corresponding English metre; also by Fertig, ii. 37.

an answer to a prayer according with thy desire. High stands the church in splendour, extending neither to right nor left, but with towering front looking towards the equinoctial sunrise. Within is shining light, and the gilding of the coffered ceiling allures the sunbeams golden as itself. The whole basilica is bright with diverse marbles, floor vaulting and windows all adorned with figures of most various colour, and mosaic green as a blooming mead shows its design of sapphire cubes winding through the ground of verdant glass.[1] The entrance is a triple portico proudly set on Aquitanian columns; a second portico of like design closes the atrium at the farther side, and the mid-space is flanked afar by columns numerous as forest stems. On the one side runs the noisy highway, on the other leaps the Saône; here turns the traveller who rides or goes afoot, here the driver of the creaking carriage; here the towers, bowed over the rope, raise their river-chant to Christ till the banks re-echo Alleluia. So raise the psalm, O wayfarer and boatman, for here is the goal of all mankind, hither runs for all the way of their salvation.'

You see I have done your bidding as if you were the older and I the younger man. But mind not to forget that I expect repayment with compound interest; and to make the payment easy and positively delightful, there is only one thing to do: read shamelessly; never stop longing for your books. The auspicious event, now so near, I mean the home-coming of your bride, must not distract you; keep steadily before your mind how many wives have held the lamp for studious or meditative lords—Marcia for Hortensius, Terentia for

Tullius, Calpurnia for Pliny, Pudentilla for Apuleius,
6 Rusticana for Symmachus. When you are inclined to complain that feminine companionship may deaden not only your eloquence but your poetic talent as well, and dull the fine edge which long study has set upon your diction, remember how often Corinna helped her Ovid to round off a verse, Lesbia her Catullus, Caesennia her Gaetulicus, Argentaria her Lucan, Cynthia her Propertius, or Delia her Tibullus. Why, it is as clear as day that, to the studious, marriage is opportunity, and only to the idle an excuse. Set to, then; do not permit a mob of the unlettered to discourage your zeal for letters. For it is Nature's law in all the arts that the rarer the accomplishment, the higher the value. Farewell.

XI

To his friend Rusticus

A. D. 461–7

1 If only we lived nearer to each other, and the distance which sunders us were less vast, I should allow no remissness in correspondence to affect the duties of our established intimacy. I should not cease, the foundations of our mutual friendship once laid, to raise thereon a noble structure by all honourable attention. The distance of our homes from each other may hardly affect the union of hearts linked once for all,
2 yet it interferes with the intercourse of minds. The remoteness of our cities is really responsible for the rarity of our letters; but so close is our friendship that we keep accusing ourselves, though all the time the

obstacles are purely natural, and afford no real ground either for blame or for excuse. I opened my gates in a good hour, illustrious lord, to your messengers, in whom I marked the effect of your training and the influence of their master's unassuming manners. I heard with pleasure all they had to say, and finally dismissed them as the event required. Farewell.

XII

To his brother-in-law Agricola

A. D. 461–7

WHAT a fast and well-built boat you have sent, 1
roomy enough to hold a couch ; and a present of fish too ! In addition, a steersman who knows the whole river well, with sturdy and expert oarsmen who seem able to shoot up-stream just as fast as down. But you must hold me excused if I decline your invitation to join your fishing ; stronger nets than yours detain me here, nets of anxiety for our invalids, a source of concern not merely to our own circle but to many beyond its limits. If the natural feelings of a brother awaken in you the moment you open this, you too will give up the expedition and return. The cause of this 2
general solicitude is our Severiana. At first she was troubled by a shattering intermittent cough ; upon this an exhaustive fever supervened which has grown worse during successive nights. She longs to get away into the country ; when your letter came, we were actually preparing to leave town for the villa. Whether you decide to stay where you are, or to come to us, join your prayers to ours that Nature with her vigorous

growth may bring back health to one pining for country air. Your sister and I have been living in suspense between hope and fear; we thought that to oppose the invalid's wish would only make her fret the more. So under Christ's guidance we are determined to fly the languor and heat of town with all our household, and incidentally escape the doctors also, who disagree across the bed, and by their ignorance and endless visits conscientiously kill off their patients. Only Justus shall be of our party, but in the quality of friend, not as physician; Justus, who, if this were a time for jesting, I could easily prove a Chiron rather than a Machaon.[1] Let us then with all the more diligence entreat and beseech the Lord that the cure which our efforts fail to effect may come down to our invalid from above. Farewell.

XIII

To Serranus *

A. D. 461–7

1 The advocate Marcellinus has brought your letter; I find him a man of experience; he is of the sort that makes friends. The consecrated words of greeting over, you give all the rest of your space, no trifling amount, to laudation of Petronius Maximus, your imperial patron. With more persistence (or shall I call it amiability?) than truth and justice, you style him 'the most fortunate', because, after holding all the most honourable offices of state, he at last attained the diadem. Personally, I shall always refuse to call

* Partly translated by Hodgkin, ii. 200–2.

that man fortunate who is poised on the precipi-
tous and slippery peak of office. O the unspeakable 2
miseries of that life, the life of your fortunates! And
are they who usurp the title, as Sulla did, really to be
so styled for trampling upon all law and justice, and
believing power the only happiness? Does not their
blindness to their own most harassing servitude alone
prove them more wretched than other men? For as
kings rule their subjects, so desire of domination domi-
nates kings. Were the fate of all princes before and 3
after him left out of the account, this Maximus of
yours would alone provide the maximum of warnings.[1]
He had scaled with intrepidity the prefectorian, the
patrician, the consular citadels; with an unsated appe-
tite for office, he took for a second term posts which he
had already held. But when the supreme effort brought
him to the yawning gulf of the imperial dignity, his
head swam beneath the diadem at sight of that
enormous power, and the man who once could not
bear to have a master could not now endure to be one.
Imagine how much was left in all this of the influence, 4
the power, and the stability of the old life; then think
of this two-months' principate, its beginning, its whirl-
wind course, its end. Is it not plain that his real
happiness was over and done before this epithet of
'fortunate' was ever given him? The man who once
was so great a figure, with his conspicuous way of
life, his banquets, his lavish expense, his retinues, his
literary pursuits, his official rank, his estates, his extensive
patronage; who so jealously watched the flight of time
that the clock[2] must set before his eyes the passage of
every hour; this man, once made emperor, and prisoned

in the palace walls, was rueing his own success before the first evening fell. And when his mountainous cares forbade him to mete the hours in his former tranquil way, he had to make instant renunciation of the old regular life; he soon discovered that the business of empire and a senatorial ease are inconsistent with each
5 other. The future did not deceive his sad forebodings; it was no help to him to have traversed all other offices of the court in the fairest of fair weather; his rule of it was from the first tempestuous, with popular tumults, tumults of soldiery, tumults of allies. And the climax was unprecedentedly swift and cruel; Fortune, who had long cozened him, showed now all her faithlessness and made a bloody end; it was the last of her that stung him, as the tail of the scorpion stings. A prominent, noble man of high culture, whose talents raised him to quaestor's rank, a man of great influence among the nobility, I mean Fulgentius, used to say that whenever the thrice-loathed burden of a crown set Maximus longing for his ancient ease, he would often hear him exclaim: 'Happy thou, O Damocles, whose royal duresse did
6 not outlast a single banquet!' History tells us that Damocles was a Sicilian of Syracuse, and an acquaintance of the tyrant Dionysius. One day, when he was extolling to the skies the privileges of his patron's life without any comprehension of its drawbacks, Dionysius said to him: 'Would you like to see for yourself, at this very board, what the blessings and the curses of royalty are like?' 'I should think I would,' replied the other. Instantly the dazzled and delighted creature was stripped of his commoner's garb and made resplendent with robes of Tyrian and Tarentine dye;

they set him on a gold couch with coverings of silk, a figure glittering with gems and pearls. But just as 7
a Sardanapalian feast was about to begin, and bread of fine Leontine wheat was handed round; just as rare viands were brought in on plate of yet greater rarity; just as the Falernian foamed in great gem-like cups and unguents tempered the ice-cold crystal; just as the whole room breathed cinnamon and frankincense and exotic perfumes floated to every nostril; just as the garlands were drying on heads drenched with nard,—behold a bare sword, swinging from the ceiling right over his purple-mantled shoulders, as if every instant it must fall and pierce his throat. The menace of that heavy blade on that horsehair thread curbed his greed and made him reflect on Tantalus; the awful thought oppressed him that all he swallowed might be rendered through gaping wounds. He wept, he prayed, he 8
sighed in every key; and when at last he was let go, he was off like a flash, flying the wealth and the delights of kings as fast as most men follow after them. A horror of high estate brought him back with longing to the mean, nicely cautioned never again to think or call the mortal happy who lives ringed round with army and guards, or broods heavy over his spoils [1] while the steel presses no less heavily upon him than he himself upon his gold. If such a state be the goal of happiness I know not my lord brother; but that those who attain it are the most miserable of men is proved beyond dispute. Farewell.

XIV

To his friend Maurusius

A. D. 461–7

1 I HEAR that your vines have responded to your hard work and our general hopes with a more abundant harvest than a threatening and lean year promised. I expect that you will consequently stay longer at the village of Vialoscum;[1] was not the place formerly called Martialis, from the time when it formed Caesar's winter quarters? Of course you have a rich vineyard there, and a large farm besides worthy of its great proprietor, both of which will keep you and yours busy harvesting the various crops and always in fresh quarters.

2 When your granaries and stores are full, you may decide to pass the snowy months of Janus and Numa in rural ease[2] by your smoking hearth until swallow and stork reappear; if so, we too shall cut short engagements hardly promising enough to keep us in town, and while you enjoy your country life we shall enjoy your society. You know me well enough to be aware that even the sight of a fine estate with ample revenues could never give me half the satisfaction or the keen pleasure which I derive from intercourse with a neighbour of my own years and so worthy of my esteem. Farewell.

BOOK III

I

To his friend Avitus

c. A.D. 472

FROM our earliest boyhood and through our youth 1
you and I have been linked by many bonds of mutual affection. To begin with, our mothers were very near relations. Then we were born about the same time and were contemporaries at school; we were together initiated into the study of the arts and employed our leisure in the same amusements; we were promoted by the same imperial favour; we were colleagues in the service of the state. Lastly, in personal likings and antipathies our judgement has always agreed—perhaps a stronger and more efficient factor this, in widening the scope of friendship than all the rest together. The outward resemblance of our careers drew us 2
together by the bond of similar occupation; inwardly we were less alike, for yours was by far the higher and more excellent nature. And now I gladly recognize that yours is the hand to crown the edifice of our long mutual regard by this most timely endowment of the church in our poor town of Clermont, whose unworthy bishop I am. In this estate of Cutiacum, lying almost at its gates, you have indeed made an important addition to its property; to the members of our sacred profession

whom your generosity has thus enriched, the convenience of access counts for almost as much as the
3 revenue which the place yields. Under your late sister's will, you were only a co-heir, but the example of your piety has already moved your surviving sister to emulate your good works. And heaven has already repaid you as you deserve for your own deed and its effect upon her; God has chosen you out to be exalted by unusual good fortune in inheritances. He did not long delay to reward your devotion a hundredfold, and it is our sure belief that these earthly gifts will be followed by heavenly gifts hereafter. I may tell you, if you are really unaware of it, that the Nicetian succession is
4 heaven's repayment for Cutiacum surrendered. We pray you in the future to extend to the city itself the interest you have already shown its church; henceforward it should be more than ever the object of your protection since you have inherited a property there. You may conclude from the attitude of the Goths how valuable the place might become if you would only make it frequent visits; they are always depreciating their own Septimania,[1] and even talking of returning it to the empire, all because they covet this land of yours, which they would like to annex even if everything upon
5 it were laid waste. But by God's grace and your mediation a more tranquil outlook lies before us. For though the Goths have broken their old bounds, though their valour and the impetus of a vague greed have pushed their frontiers to the Rhône and Loire, yet the esteem in which you are held and the weight your opinion carries, should so influence both sides that we shall learn to refuse when we ought, and they to refrain

from further demands when met with a firm denial. Farewell.

II

To his friend Constantius

A. D. 474

THE people of Clermont salute you, a great guest 1
in their lowly homes,[1] coming without ambitious retinue and simply environed by their love. Merciful God, what joy they felt amid their tribulation when you set your venerated foot within their half-ruined walls. How dense was the crowd of both sexes, and of every rank and age about you; how impartially you gave a cheering word to one and all; how kind the small boys found you, how considerate the young men, how helpful in advice the older among us. What tears you shed over our buildings ruined by the flames and our homes half burned to the ground, as if you had been the father of us all. What grief you showed at the sight of fields buried under the bones of the unburied dead. And afterwards what a power of encouragement you were, with what spirit you urged the people to repair their loss. Over and above this, you found the city no 2
less desolated by internal dissension than by the barbarian onslaught; but you conciliated all; you renewed their harmony; you gave the country back her sons. The walls are re-manned, the people restored to them at unity, all thanks to you; your counsel it was which brought them back into one mind as into one city. They all regard you as their father and themselves as your children; they perceive with an infallible eye

3 wherein lies your greatest title to praise. For day by day it is borne in upon their minds what a magnificent thing this is that you have done at so advanced an age and in so delicate and infirm a state of health. Despite your noble birth and the veneration with which you are regarded, you broke down every barrier by sheer force of love; all the difficulties of the journey were nothing to you, long ways and short days, thick snows and thin fare, wide wastes and narrow lodging,[1] roads full of holes, now sodden with rain, now ribbed with frost, highways covered with rough stones, rivers slippery with ice; you had steep hills to climb, valleys choked with continual landslides to pass; through every discomfort you came triumphant with the love of a whole people for your reward because your own comfort was the last thing of which you thought.

4 And now we beseech the Lord that he may hear our prayer and set far the term of your life; that the friendship of all good men may be yours to have and hold; that our affection which you seem to be leaving behind may ever be about your path; and finally, that the fair structure of our concord which you began to restore, may be regarded from foundation to summit as your peculiar work. Farewell.

III

To his brother-in-law Ecdicius

A. D. 474

1 THERE never was a time when my people of Clermont needed you so much as now; their affection for you is

a ruling passion for more than one reason. First, because a man's native soil may rightly claim the chief place in his affection; secondly, because you were not only your countrymen's joy at birth, but the desire of their hearts while yet unborn. Perhaps of no other man in this age can the same be said; but the proof of the statement is that as your mother's time advanced, the citizens with one accord fell to checking every day as it went by. I will not dwell on those common things 2
which yet so deeply stir a man's heart, as that here was the grass on which as an infant you crawled, or that here were the first fields you trod, the first rivers you swam, the first woods through which you broke your way in the chase. I will not remind you that here you first played ball and cast the dice, here you first knew sport with hawk and hound, with horse and bow. I will forget that your schooldays brought us a veritable confluence of learners and the learned from all quarters, and that if our nobles were imbued with the love of eloquence and poetry, if they resolved to forsake the barbarous Celtic dialect, it was to your personality that they owed all. Nothing so kindled 3
their universal regard for you as this, that you first made Romans of them and never allowed them to relapse again.[1] And how should the vision of you ever fade from any patriot's memory as we saw you in your glory upon that famous day, when a crowd of both sexes and every rank and age lined our half-ruined walls to watch you cross the space between us and the enemy? At midday, and right across the middle of the plain, you brought your little company of eighteen [2] safe through some thousands of the Goths, a feat which

4 posterity will surely deem incredible. At the sight of you, nay, at the very rumour of your name, those seasoned troops were smitten with stupefaction; their captains were so amazed that they never stopped to note how great their own numbers were and yours how small. They drew off their whole force to the brow of a steep hill; they had been besiegers before, but when you appeared they dared not even deploy for action. You cut down some of their bravest, whom gallantry alone had led to defend the rear. You never lost a man in that sharp engagement, and found yourself sole master of an absolutely exposed plain with no more soldiers to back you than you often have guests at your
5 own table. Imagination may better conceive than words describe the procession that streamed out to you as you made your leisurely way towards the city, the greetings, the shouts of applause, the tears of heartfelt joy. One saw you receiving in the press a veritable ovation on this glad return; the courts of your spacious house were crammed with people. Some kissed away the dust of battle from your person, some took from the horses the bridles slimed with foam and blood, some inverted and ranged the sweat-drenched saddles; others undid the flexible cheek-pieces of the helmet you longed to remove, others set about unlacing your greaves. One saw folk counting the notches in swords blunted by much slaughter, or measuring with trembling fingers the holes made in cuirasses by cut or thrust.
6 Crowds danced with joy and hung upon your comrades; but naturally the full brunt of popular delight was borne by you. You were among unarmed men at last; but not all your arms would have availed to extricate

you from them. There you stood, with a fine grace suffering the silliest congratulations; half torn to pieces by people madly rushing to salute you, but so loyally responsive to this popular devotion that those who took the greatest liberties seemed surest of your most generous acknowledgements. And finally I shall say nothing of 7
the service you performed in raising what was practically a public force from your private resources, and with little help from our magnates. I shall not tell of the chastisement you inflicted on the barbaric raiders, and the curb imposed upon an audacity which had begun to exceed all bounds; or of those surprise attacks which annihilated whole squadrons with the loss of only two or three men on your side. Such disasters did you inflict upon the enemy by these unexpected onsets, that they resorted to a most unworthy device to conceal their heavy losses. They decapitated all whom they could not bury in the short night-hours, and let the headless lie, forgetting in their desire to avoid the identification of their dead, that a trunk would betray their ruin just as well as a whole body. When, with morning 8
light, they saw their miserable artifice revealed in all its savagery, they turned at last to open obsequies; but their precipitation disguised the ruse no better than the ruse itself had concealed the slaughter. They did not even raise a temporary mound of earth over the remains; the dead were neither washed, shrouded, nor interred; but the imperfect rites they received befitted the manner of their death. Bodies were brought in from everywhere, piled on dripping wains; and since you never paused a moment in following up the rout, they had to be taken into houses which were then hurriedly set

alight, till the fragments of blazing roofs, falling in
9 upon them, formed their funeral pyres. But I run on beyond my proper limits; my aim in writing was not to reconstruct the whole story of your achievements, but to remind you of a few among them, to convince you how eagerly your friends here long to see you again; there is only one remedy, at once quick and efficacious, for such fevered expectancy as theirs, and that is your prompt return. If, then, the entreaties of our people can persuade you, sound the retreat and start homeward at once. The intimacy of kings is dangerous;[1] court it no more; the most distinguished of mankind have well compared it to a flame, which illuminates things at a short distance but consumes them if they come within its range. Farewell.

IV

To his friend Magnus Felix

A. D. 473

1 The bearer of this is Gozolas, a Jew, and a client of your excellency, a man I should like if I could only overcome my contempt for his sect. I write in great anxiety. Our town lives in terror of a sea of tribes which find in it an obstacle to their expansion and surge in arms all round it. We are exposed as a pitiful prey at the mercy of rival peoples, suspected by the Burgundians, almost in contact with the Goths; we have to face at once the fury of our assailants and the envy
2 of our defenders.[2] But of this more later. Only let me know that all goes well with you, and I shall be

content. For though we may be punished in the sight of all men for some obscure offence, we are still generous enough of heart to desire for others all prosperity. If a man cannot wish others well in evil times he is no better than a captive; the enemy that takes him is his own unworthy nature. Farewell.

V

To his friend Hypatius

A. D. 473

THE excellent Donidius admires and respects your 1
character; and had he no other aim than his own family advantage, he might safely confide in your acknowledged reputation, and feel no need of another's advocacy. But he thinks so well of me, that he would have me ask for him what he could certainly obtain alone. Consequently, you will acquire a crowning title of distinction in making both of us your debtors, though one alone will reap the material benefit. He seeks to 2
acquire the other moiety of the estate of Eborolacum,[1] abandoned even before the barbarian came, but now in possession of a patrician family; his rights are clear, but the added weight of your support would be very welcome. Respect for the memory of his ancestors, and no mere greed, inclines him to this purchase, for down to the recent death of his stepfather the whole property belonged to his family. He is of an economical turn of mind, but not the man to covet his neighbour's goods; the loss of a former possession in itself troubles him little; the point of honour decides him; it is not avarice which prompts his action, but the

3 shame of inactivity. Deign therefore to consider what you owe to your own credit, to his honourable desire, to my friendly intercession; help to secure for him this chance of rounding off the estate. These paternal acres are not just casually known to him; he crawled upon them as an infant hardly weaned. He will make little profit by their recovery; but he feels that it would have been too contemptible not to make the effort. Whatever favour you may be able to accord to one whom I regard as a brother in years, a son by profession, a fellow citizen by origin, and a friend by loyalty, I shall be as much beholden as if the matter turned to my own particular advantage. Farewell.

VI

To his friend Eutropius

A. D. 470 (?)

1 If kind memories still remain to you of our old comradeship and of an intimacy ever and again renewed, you will readily understand that our soaring wishes will follow your ascent to each new height of office. We rejoice with you over your insignia, believing that thereby your house and our friendship are alike promoted. In proof whereof I remind you of my letter of exhortations [1], which I think had no small share in this result.

2 But what trouble I had in persuading you that a man might be a philosopher and a prefect at the same time! You were deep in the tenets of Plotinus, and the Platonic school had seduced you into a quietism unsuited to your age. I maintained that only a man without family

obligations was free to profess a philosophy of that nature. Most people ascribed your scorn for public service to simple indolence; malignant tongues added that our nobles fail to rise in the state less from disinclination than incapacity. Now, therefore, as a 3
Christian should, I begin by rendering unstinted thanks to Our Lord who has raised you to an official rank befitting your exalted birth; our hopes are also raised, so that we may fairly look for even better things to come. It is a common saying with provincials that a good year really depends less on ample crops than on a good administration;[1] it must be yours, honoured lord, to crown all our expectations by such measures as the present occasion demands. Our nobles do not forget the stock from which you spring; they are sure that so long as the family of Sabinus controls their destinies, they have nothing to fear from the house of Sabinianus.[2] Farewell.

VII

To his friend [Magnus] Felix

A. D. 474

You are very sparing in your correspondence. Each 1
of us obeys his own temperament: I gossip, you hold your peace. And since in other obligations of friendship you are beyond reproach, I am driven to the conclusion that this indefatigable love of ease must itself be a kind of virtue. But, seriously, will no thought of old acquaintance ever lift you from the rut of this interminable silence? Or are you really unaware that it is nothing short of insult to refuse a talkative man an

answer? You bury yourself in the depths of a library or office and give no sign of life, yet all the while expect the attention of a line now and then from me; and this though you know quite well that mine is rather
2 a ready than a gifted pen. The apprehensions among which we live ought alone to furnish you with subject enough for letters; write then, and do not fail to entrust a good bulky missive to some one coming our way, to relieve your friends' anxieties and especially to let them know whether the new quaestor Licinianus [1] is likely to open a door of safety out of these mutual alarms. He is described as one who has more than fulfilled the expectations formed of him, proving greater on acquaintance than his great repute; in fine, a man conspicuously endowed
3 with the best gifts of nature and good fortune. A model of judgement, adorned with equal discretion and personal charm, this trusty envoy is worthy of the power which he represents. He is quite free from affectation or pretence; there is nothing feigned in the gravity which lends weight to his words. He does not follow the example of most envoys who seek a reputation as safe men, and are over-timid in diplomacy; on the other hand, he is not to be numbered among those ambassadors to barbarian courts, who sell their master's secrets, and work for their own advantage rather than
4 that of their mission. Such is the character of the man as favourable rumour carries it to us. But let us know at once if the description squares with fact. Then perhaps we may snatch some breathing-space from our unceasing vigils; at present neither a snowy day nor a cloudy moonless night will tempt our people from their watch upon the walls. Even were the barbarian

to draw off to winter quarters, their fears are too deep to be eradicated; at the most, they can only be deferred. Encourage us with hope of better times; you may regard our country as remote, but the cause we stand for is as near to your own heart as to ours. Farewell.

VIII

To his friend Eucherius

(No indication of date)

I HAVE the highest respect for the men of antiquity, 1
but mere priority in time shall never lead me to place the virtues and the merits of our contemporaries upon a lower plane of excellence. It may be true that the Roman state has sunk to such extreme misery that it has ceased to reward its loyal sons; but I will not therefore admit that a Brutus or a Torquatus is never born into our age. You ask the purport of this declaration? You yourself shall point my moral, most capable of men; the state owes you the rewards which history applauds when granted to the great men of the past. Men ignorant of the facts had best refrain from 2
carelessly conceived opinions; they had best abandon the obstinate habit of looking up to the men of old time and down on those of our own day. It is abundantly clear that the recognition which the state owes you is now long overdue. Yet what is there to wonder at in this, when a race of uncivilized allies directs the Roman power, yes, and bids fair to bring it crashing to the ground? We have men of rank and valour who excel anything we ourselves could hope, or our enemies believe.

Aye, and they do the old deeds; but the reward is not forthcoming. Farewell.

IX

To his friend Riothamus

c. A. D. 472

1 I WILL write once more in my usual strain, mingling compliment with grievance. Not that I at all desire to follow up the first words of greeting with disagreeable subjects, but things seem to be always happening which a man of my order and in my position can neither mention without unpleasantness, nor pass over without neglect of duty. Yet I do my best to remember the burdensome and delicate sense of honour which makes you so
2 ready to blush for others' faults. The bearer of this is an obscure and humble person, so harmless, insignificant, and helpless that he seems to invite his own discomfiture; his grievance is that the Bretons are secretly enticing his slaves away. Whether his indictment is a true one, I cannot say; but if you can only confront the parties and decide the matter on its merits, I think the unfortunate man may be able to make good his charge, if indeed a stranger from the country unarmed, abject and impecunious to boot, has ever a chance of a fair or kindly hearing against adversaries with all the advantages he lacks, arms, astuteness, turbulences, and the aggressive spirit of men backed by numerous friends. Farewell.

X

To his friend Tetradius

A. D. 461–7

It is a most laudable trait in the character of younger 1
men when they resort to more experienced heads in questions of perplexity; as the honourable Theodorus now does. He is a man of good family, but quite as much ennobled by his admirable modesty as by his high descent. My letter introduces him to the source of humane letters, I mean the pure fount of your erudition, to which he is setting out with the most commendable ardour, hoping to learn much himself and perhaps bring away as much to impart to others. Should 2
even an experience like yours fail to give him all the help he needs against such factious and powerful opponents, at all events your skill and advice will stand him in good stead. Unless you wish me to conclude that you regard our joint petition as troublesome and importunate, justify his hopes of you and this testimonial of mine by a favourable reply, so that the cause and wavering fortunes of this suppliant may be fortified by your salutary counsel. Farewell.

XI

To his friend Simplicius

(No indication of date)

A kind of fatality attends my hopes, and you still 1
grudge us a sight of you. But, most excellent of

men, we need not therefore regard you as one whose memorable actions must necessarily escape our notice. For all our people, the notables included, hail you with one accord as the model of all that a father should be, even in the select and critical society in which you
2 move. The manner in which you have brought up your daughter, and chosen a husband for her, confirms the opinion of our friends; and the accomplishment of your desires in this union must have raised in your mind an agreeable uncertainty whether you have most excelled in the choice of the one or the education of the other. On that score, venerable parents, you may wholly set your minds at rest; you surpass every one because your children surpass even you. Please, therefore, excuse my earlier letter; it was negligent of me not to have sent it before I did, but the dispatch of it, I fear, betrayed the chatterer. My officiousness will lose its blemish of loquacity if you condone the impertinence of this greeting by sending me an answer. Farewell.

XII

To his nephew Secundus

c. A. D. 467

1 I HAVE dreadful news. Yesterday profane hands all but desecrated the grave where my grandsire and your great-grandsire lies,[1] but God's intervening arm stayed the accomplishment of an impious act. The cemetery had for years been overcrowded with burned and unburned burials,[2] and interment there had long ceased. But snows and constant rains had caused the mounds

to settle; the raised earth had been dispersed, and the ground had resumed its former even surface. This explained how it was that some undertaker's men presumed to profane the spot with their grave-digging tools just as if it were unoccupied by human bodies. Must 2
I relate what happened? They had already unturfed the ground, so that the soil showed black, and were piling the fresh sods upon the old grave. By a mere chance I happened to be passing on my way to Clermont, and saw this public outrage from the top of a neighbouring hill. I gave my horse his head, and dashed at full speed over the intervening ground, flat or steep was all the same to me; I grudged even those brief moments, and sending a shout before me, stopped the infamy even before I myself reached the scene. The villains, caught in the act, were still hesitating whether to make off or hold their ground, when I was upon them. It was wrong, no doubt, but I could not allow them an instant's impunity; on the very grave of our beloved ancestor I gave them such a trouncing[1] as should in future secure the dead from molestation, and safeguard the pious care of the survivors. I did not reserve the 3
case for the judgement of our good bishop,[2] considering it best for the common advantage not to do so; I knew too well the strength of my own case, and his gentle nature; he was certain to judge me with too much severity, and these fellows with too great a lenience. To satisfy his right to be informed I did explain the whole affair after I had resumed my journey, and this upright and holy man gave me far more than the mere absolution I expected; he extolled my righteous indignation, declaring that in his opinion men who perpetrated

so audacious a deed deserved the death our forefathers
4 would have inflicted. The incident should help to prevent any similar mischance in future, and I beg you to see that the disturbed earth is at once raised to a mound again, and to have a smooth flat slab placed upon it at my expense. I have deposited a sum of money with the venerable Gaudentius to cover the cost of the stone and of the mason's labour. The verses which I enclose were composed the night of the occurrence; of course they are not finished to perfection; I was too
5 busy with preparations for the road. Such as they are, please have them carved on the tomb with the smallest possible delay, and be specially careful that the stone-mason makes no errors either by negligence or with intention; for whatever the cause, the captious reader will put it all down to me. If you carry out this pious obligation I shall thank you no less heartily than if you were not certain to receive part of the praise and credit. For were I, your uncle, no longer with you, the whole responsibility of this duty would have devolved on you as the next descendant after myself.

'A grandson not all unworthy of such a grandsire, I dedicate to him, though all too late, this epitaph, my father and my paternal uncles being dead, that you, O passer by, may never tread on unmounded earth, unwitting of the reverence due to him who is buried in this grave. Here lies Apollinaris, who, having ruled all Gaul, was gathered to the bosom of a mourning country. He was learned in the law and helpful to his kind above all other men. He laboured for the land, and for the State, and in the cause of eloquence; and, example perilous to others, he dared be free

under the rule of tyrants. But this stands as his chief title to fame, that of all his race he was the first to purify his brow with the sign of the cross and his limbs with baptismal water; he first abandoned the old sacrilegious rites. This is the highest glory, this the transcendent virtue, if a man outstrip in hope those whom he equals in honours, and is placed by his desert above his fathers though on earth his titles were the same as theirs.'

I know well that this epitaph is unworthy of our 6
accomplished ancestor; yet methinks the souls of the lettered do not refuse a poetic tribute. And neither of us need regard as too belated the pious duty which we have now fulfilled in our quality as heirs in the third and fourth degree. How many revolving years rolled by before Alexander celebrated funeral rites for Achilles' shade, or Julius Caesar for the shade of that Hector whom he treated as an ancestor of his own? Farewell.

XIII

To [his son] Apollinaris

c. A.D. 469

THE love of purity which leads you to shun the 1
company of the immodest has my whole approval; I rejoice at it and respect it, especially when the men you shun are those whose aptitude for scenting and retailing scandals leaves nothing privileged or sacred, wretches who think themselves enormously facetious when they violate the public sense of shame by shameless language. Hear now from my lips that the standard-

bearer of the vile troop is the very Gnatho of our
2 country.[1] Imagine an arch-stringer of tales, arch-fabricator of false charges, arch-retailer of insinuations. A fellow whose talk is at once without end and without point; a buffoon without charm in gaiety; a bully who dares not stand his ground. Inquisitive without insight, and three-times more the boor for his brazen affectation of fine manners. A creature of the present hour, with ever a carping word ready for the past and a sneer for the future. When he is after some advantage, no beggar so importunate as he; when refused, none so bitter in depreciation. Grant his request and he grumbles, using every artifice to get better terms; he moans and groans when called on to refund a debt, and if he pays, you never hear the end of it. But when any one wants a loan of him he lies about his means and pretends he has not the wherewithal; if he does lend, he makes capital out of the loan, and bruits the secret abroad; if debtors delay repayment he resorts to calumny; when they have
3 absolved the debt he tries to deny receipt. Abstinence is his abomination, he loves the table; but a man who lives well wins no praise from him unless he treats well too. Personally, he is avarice itself; the best of bread is not for his digestion unless it is also the bread of others. He only eats at home if he can pilfer his viands, and send them off amid a storm of buffets. He cannot indeed be wholly denied the virtue of frugality; he fasts when he cannot get himself invited. Yet with the light perversity of the parasite, he will often excuse himself when asked; on the other hand, if he sees
4 that men avoid him, he will fish for invitations. If left out he grows abusive; if admitted, unbearably

elate: no blow descends on him unexpected. If dinner is served late, he falls like a bandit upon the dishes; if appetite is stilled too soon, he falls to lamentation. Thirst unquenched makes him quarrelsome; drunkenness makes him sick. If he banters others, he grows scurrilous; if others banter him, ungovernable; take him for all in all, he is like the filth in sewers, the fouler the more you stir it. His life brings pleasure to few, love to none, contemptuous mockery to all. He is one to burst bladders or break canes upon,[1] one whose thirst for drink is only excelled by his thirst for scandal; exhaling loathsomeness, frothing wine, uttering venom, he makes one doubt for what to hate him most, his unsavouriness, his drunken habits, or his villany. 'But', you may say, 'perhaps a fair complexion lends 5
a colour to a vile nature; perhaps his charm of person redeems ineptitude of mind; the man may have elegance or exquisite taste; he may create a good impression on those who meet him.' In point of fact, his person is fouler and more unsightly than a corpse rolled half-burnt from the pyre when the brands have settled—such a thing as a very undertaker's slave [2] could not bring himself to put back. He hardly sees out of his eyes, which, like the Stygian lake, roll waters down through darkness. His ears are elephantine; an ulcered 6
skin surrounds each aperture with indurated waste, either helix is bossed with suppurating tumours. His nose is broad at the nostril and narrow at the bridge, strait for his own olfactory ends, but for the spectator a cavernous vision of horror. He obtrudes a face with leaden lips and a bestial rictus, with purulent gums and brown teeth; a foul mephitic odour breathes from his

decayed and hollow teeth, enhanced by eructations from the feasts of yesterday and the bilge of his excesses at
7 the board. A forehead too he flaunts hideous with creases and distension of the brows. He grows a beard which age vainly whitens, since Sylla's malady [1] keeps it black. His whole face is as pale as if it were ever dolorous with infesting shades. I spare you the hulking residue, gout-ridden, fat and flabby. I spare you his weal-furrowed skull, covered with almost as many scars as hairs. I spare you the description of a nape so short that when his head is thrown back
8 it seems to merge into his shoulder-blades. The sunken carriage, the lost grace and vigour of his arms, the gouty hands bound cestus-like with greasy poultices; all these I spare you, so too the acrid hircine armpits that entrench his sides, and pollute the air for every nostril near him with a reek three times more pestilent than that from Ampsanctus' cave.[2] And breasts collapsed with adiposity horrible on a man's body even in mere protuberance, but now hanging like a mother's. And the pendulous folds of the abdomen about genitals thrice shameful in their debility, a foul creased covering worse
9 than what it hides. Why should I tell of his back and spine? True, the ribs do sweep round from the vertebral joints and cover the chest, but the whole branching structure of bones is drowned under a billowing main of belly. I pass over the fat reins and buttocks which make even his paunch look insignificant in comparison. I pass the bent and withered thigh, the swollen knees, the slender hams, the horny shanks, the weak ankles, the small toes and enormous feet. As I have drawn him, he is horrible enough in his deformity, a monster

from whom his infinite noisomeness drains half the blood and life, who cannot sit a litter or walk a yard, however much they prop him. But his tongue is more detestable still than his other members. He keeps it busy 10
in the service of the vilest prurience; but it is most dangerous of all to patrons with anything to hide. For those in luck he belauds, but those who are unfortunate he betrays; let a tempting moment but urge to disclosure of a friend's secret, and instantly this Spartacus will break all bars and open every seal. He will mine with the unseen tunnels of his treachery the houses which the rams of open war have failed to breach. This is the fashion in which our Daedalus crowns the edifice of his friendships, sticking as close as Theseus in prosperity; but when adversity comes, more elusive than any Proteus. The more you avoid even a first introduction to 11
such company the better you will please me; especially to those so shameless that they talk like degraded players at the booths, and know neither bar nor bridle. For when a man exults in leaving all seemliness and decency behind, and fouls a loose tongue with the dirt of all lawless licence, be sure his heart is no less filthy than his language. You may find an evil liver with a serious tongue; the foul tongue and virtuous life are very rarely allied. Farewell.

XIV

To his friend Placidus

AFTER A. D. 477

THOUGH your loved Grenoble[1] holds you far from 1
me, I learn from a sure channel—your former hosts—

that you are kind enough to prefer my trifles in prose or verse to all the other volumes on your shelves. It goes without saying that it gave me pleasure to hear how my writings occupy your leisure; but I understand well enough that it is really affection for the author and not the quality of his work which procures you this delight. My debt is all the greater; friendship wins me the honour which you could not honestly give the composi-
2 tion. For the rest, I have not yet considered what definitive reply I shall make to the detractors of my work. The self-appointed critic absorbs a sound or unsound style with equal appetite; he cares no more that the world should exalt his favourite than that it should despise the object of his mockery. And so we see the fine construction, the comeliness and grandeur of our Latin tongue exposed to contemptuous criticism of idle quidnuncs; minds careless and so flippant as this want books only to carp at; their use for literature is a mere abuse. Farewell.

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